

219.015 STATE RAIL SAFETY INSPECTOR.

Subdivision 1. **Positions established; duties.** (a) The commissioner of transportation shall establish three state rail safety inspector positions in the Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations of the Minnesota Department of Transportation. On or after July 1, 2015, the commissioner may establish a fourth state rail safety inspector position following consultation with railroad companies. The commissioner shall apply to and enter into agreements with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) of the United States Department of Transportation to participate in the federal State Rail Safety Participation Program for training and certification of an inspector under authority of United States Code, title 49, sections 20103, 20105, 20106, and 20113, and Code of Federal Regulations, title 49, part 212.

(b) A state rail safety inspector shall inspect mainline track, secondary track, and yard and industry track; inspect railroad right-of-way, including adjacent or intersecting drainage, culverts, bridges, overhead structures, and traffic and other public crossings; inspect yards and physical plants; review and enforce safety requirements; review maintenance and repair records; and review railroad security measures.

(c) A state rail safety inspector may perform, but is not limited to, the duties described in the federal State Rail Safety Participation Program. An inspector may train, be certified, and participate in any of the federal State Rail Safety Participation Program disciplines, including: track, signal and train control, motive power and equipment, operating practices compliance, hazardous materials, and highway-rail grade crossings.

(d) To the extent delegated by the Federal Railroad Administration and authorized by the commissioner, an inspector may issue citations for violations of this chapter, or to ensure railroad employee and public safety and welfare.

Subd. 2. **Railroad company assessment; account; appropriation.** (a) As provided in this subdivision, the commissioner shall annually assess railroad companies that are (1) defined as common carriers under section 218.011; (2) classified by federal law or regulation as Class I Railroads, Class I Rail Carriers, Class II Railroads, or Class II Carriers; and (3) operating in this state.

(b) The assessment must be by a division of state rail safety inspector program costs in equal proportion between carriers based on route miles operated in Minnesota, assessed in equal amounts for 365 days of the calendar year. The commissioner shall assess all start-up or re-establishment costs, all related costs of initiating the state rail safety inspector program, and ongoing state rail inspector duties.

(c) The assessments must be deposited in a special account in the special revenue fund, to be known as the state rail safety inspection account. Money in the account is appropriated to the commissioner for the establishment and ongoing responsibilities of the state rail safety inspector program.

Subd. 3. **Work site safety coaching program.** The commissioner may exempt a common carrier not federally classified as Class I from violations for a period of up to two years if the common carrier applies for participation in a work site safety coaching program, such as the "MNSharp" program administered by the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry, and the commissioner determines such participation to be preferred enforcement for safety or security violations.

Subd. 4. **Appeal.** Any person aggrieved by an assessment levied under this section may appeal within 90 days any assessment, violation, or administrative penalty to the Office of Administrative Hearings, with further appeal and review by the district court.

History: 2008 c 287 art 1 s 76; 2014 c 312 art 10 s 7,8