

methodology for acquiring familiarization with physical characteristics of an engineer's operational territory. Railroads commenting on the proposed rule did not question the validity of the FRA's views concerning the essential elements of an effective program but did convince FRA that they should be given more discretion to formulate the design of their individual programs.

Rather than establish rigid requirements for each element of the program as initially proposed, FRA has given railroads discretion to select the design of their individual programs within a specified context for each element. The proposed rule, however, provides a good guide to the considerations that should be addressed in designing a program that will meet the performance standards of this final rule. In reviewing program submissions, FRA will focus on the degree to which a particular program deviates from the norms identified in its proposed rule. To the degree that a particular program submission materially deviates from the norms set out in its proposed rule which was published in the FEDERAL REGISTER on December 11, 1989 (54 FR 50890), FRA's review and approval process will be focused on determining the validity of the reasoning relied on by a railroad for selecting its alternative approach and the degree to which the alternative approach is likely to be effective in producing locomotive engineers who have the knowledge, skill, and ability to safely operate trains.

[56 FR 28254, June 19, 1991, as amended at 74 FR 25175, May 27, 2009; 74 FR 68185, Dec. 23, 2009]

#### APPENDIX C TO PART 240—PROCEDURES FOR OBTAINING AND EVALUATING MOTOR VEHICLE DRIVING RECORD DATA

The purpose of this appendix is to outline the procedures available to individuals and railroads for complying with the requirements of section 4(a) of the Railroad Safety Improvement Act of 1988 and §§ 240.109, 240.111 and 240.205 of this part. Those provisions require that railroads consider the motor vehicle driving record of each person prior to issuing him or her certification or recertification as a qualified locomotive engineer.

To fulfill that obligation, a railroad must review a certification candidate's recent motor vehicle driving record. Generally, that will be a single record on file with the state agency that issued the candidate's current license. However, it can include multiple records if the candidate has been issued a motor vehicle driving license by more than one state agency. In addition, the railroad must determine whether the certification candidate is listed in the National Driver

Register and, if so listed, to review the data that caused the candidate to be so listed.

#### *Access to State Motor Vehicle Driving Record Data*

The right of railroad workers, their employers, or prospective employers to have access to a state motor vehicle licensing agency's data concerning an individual's driving record is controlled by state law. Although many states have mechanisms through which employers and prospective employers such as railroads can obtain such data, there are some states in which privacy concerns make such access very difficult or impossible. Since individuals generally are entitled to obtain access to driving record data that will be relied on by a state motor vehicle licensing agency when that agency is taking action concerning their driving privileges, FRA places responsibility on individuals, who want to serve as locomotive engineers to request that their current state drivers licensing agency or agencies furnish such data directly to the railroad considering certifying them as a locomotive operator. Depending on the procedures adopted by a particular state agency, this will involve the candidate's either sending the state agency a brief letter requesting such action or executing a state agency form that accomplishes the same effect. It will normally involve payment of a nominal fee established by the state agency for such a records check. In rare instances, when a certification candidate has been issued multiple licenses, it may require more than a single request.

#### *The National Driver Register*

In addition to seeking an individual state's data, each engineer candidate is required to request that a search and retrieval be performed of any relevant information concerning his or her driving record contained in the National Driver Register. The National Driver Register (NDR) is a system of information created by Congress in 1960. In essence it is a nationwide repository of information on problem drivers that was created in an effort to protect motorists. It is a voluntary State/Federal cooperative program that assists motor vehicle driver licensing agencies in gaining access to data about actions taken by other state agencies concerning an individual's motor vehicle driving record. The NDR is designed to address the problem that occurs when chronic traffic law violators, after losing their license in one State travel to and receive licenses in another State. Currently the NDR is maintained by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) of the Department of Transportation under the provisions of the National Driver Register Act (23 U.S.C. 401 note). Under that statute, state

motor vehicle licensing authorities voluntarily notify NHTSA when they take action to deny, suspend, revoke or cancel a person's motor vehicle driver's license and, under the provisions of a 1982 change to the statute, states are also authorized to notify NHTSA concerning convictions for operation of a motor vehicle while under the influence of, or impaired by, alcohol or a controlled substance, and for traffic violations arising in connection with a fatal traffic accident, reckless driving or racing on the highway even if these convictions do not result in an immediate loss of driving privileges.

The information submitted to NHTSA contains, at a minimum, three specific pieces of data: the identification of the state authority providing the information, the name of the person whose license is being affected, and the date of birth of that person. It may be supplemented by data concerning the person's height, weight, color of eyes, and social security account number, if a State collects such data.

#### *Access to NDR Data*

Essentially only individuals and state licensing agencies can obtain access to the NDR data. Since railroads have no direct access to the NDR data, FRA requires that individuals seeking certification as a locomotive engineer request that an NDR search be performed and direct that the results be furnished to the railroad. FRA requires that each person request the NDR information directly from NHTSA unless the prospective operator has a motor vehicle driver license issued by a state motor vehicle licensing agency that is "participating" under the provisions of the National Driver Register Act of 1982. Participating states can directly access the NDR data on behalf of the prospective engineer. The state agencies that currently are authorized to access NDR data in that manner are identified in appendix D of this regulation.

#### *Requesting NHTSA To Perform the NDR Check*

The procedures for requesting NHTSA performance of an NDR check are as follows:

1. Each person shall submit a written request to National Highway Traffic Safety Administration at the following address: Chief, National Driver Register, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., Washington, DC 20590.
2. The request must contain:
  - (a) The full legal name;
  - (b) Any other names used by the person (*e.g.*, nickname or professional name);
  - (c) The date of birth;
  - (d) Sex;
  - (e) Height;
  - (f) Weight;
  - (g) Color of eyes;

(h) Driver's license number (unless that is not available).

3. The request must authorize NHTSA to perform the NDR check and to furnish the results of the search directly to the railroad.

4. The request must identify the railroad to which the results are to be furnished, including the proper name of the railroad, and the proper mailing address of the railroad.

5. The person seeking to become a certified locomotive engineer shall sign the request, and that signature must be notarized.

FRA requires that the request be in writing and contain as much detail as is available to improve the reliability of the data search. Any person may supply additional information to that being mandated by FRA. Furnishing additional information, such as the person's Social Security account number, will help to more positively identify any records that may exist concerning the requester. Although no fee is charged for such NDR checks, a minimal cost may be incurred in having the request notarized. The requirement for notarization is designed to ensure that each person's right to privacy is being respected and that records are only being disclosed to legally authorized parties.

#### *Requesting a State Agency To Perform the NDR Check*

As discussed earlier in connection with obtaining data compiled by the state agency itself, a person can either write a letter to that agency asking for the NDR check or can use the agency's forms for making such a request. If a request is made by letter the individual must follow the same procedures required when directly seeking the data from NHTSA. At present there are only a limited number of state licensing agencies that have the capacity to make a direct NDR inquiry of this nature. It is anticipated that the number of states with such capability will increase in the near future; therefore, FRA will continue to update the identification of such states by revising appendix D to this regulation to identify such state agencies. Since it would be more efficient for a prospective locomotive engineer to make a single request for both aspects of the information required under this rule, FRA anticipates that state agency inquiry will eventually become the predominant method for making these NDR checks. Requests to state agencies may involve payment of a nominal fee established by the state agency for such a records check.

State agencies normally will respond in approximately 30 days or less and advise whether there is or is not a listing for a person with that name and date of birth. If there is a potential match and the inquiry state was not responsible for causing that entry, the agency normally will indicate in writing the existence of a probable match and will identify the state licensing agency

that suspended, revoked or canceled the relevant license or convicted the person of one of the violations referenced earlier in this appendix.

*Actions When a Probable NDR Match Occurs*

The response provided after performance of an NDR check is limited to either a notification that no potential record match was identified or a notification that a potential record match was identified. If the latter event occurs, the notification will include the identification of the state motor vehicle licensing authority which possesses the relevant record. If the NDR check results indicate a potential match and that the state with the relevant data is the same state which furnished detailed data (because it had issued the person a driving license), no further action is required to obtain additional data. If the NDR check results indicate a potential match and the state with the relevant data is different from the state which furnished detailed data, it then is necessary to contact the individual state motor vehicle licensing authority that furnished the NDR information to obtain the relevant record. FRA places responsibility on the railroad to notify the engineer candidate and on the candidate to contact the state with the relevant information. FRA requires the certification candidate to write to the state licensing agency and request that the agency inform the railroad concerning the person's driving record. If required by the state agency, the person may have to pay a nominal fee for providing such data and may have to furnish written evidence that the prospective operator consents to the release of the data to the railroad. FRA does not require that a railroad or a certification candidate go beyond these efforts to obtain the information in the control of such a state agency, and a railroad may act upon the pending certification without the data if an individual state agency fails or refuses to supply the records.

If the non-issuing state licensing agency does provide the railroad with the available records, the railroad must verify that the record pertains to the person being considered for certification. It is necessary to perform this verification because in some instances only limited identification information is furnished for use in the NDR and this might result in data about a different person being supplied to the railroad. Among the available means for verifying that the additional state record pertains to the certification candidate are physical description, photographs and handwriting comparisons.

Once the railroad has obtained the motor vehicle driving record which, depending on the circumstance, may consist of more than two documents, the railroad must afford the prospective engineer an opportunity to re-

view that record and respond in writing to its contents in accordance with the provisions of §240.219. The review opportunity must occur before the railroad evaluates that record. The railroad's required evaluation and subsequent decision making must be done in compliance with the provisions of this part.

[56 FR 28254, June 19, 1991, as amended at 74 FR 25175, May 27, 2009]

APPENDIX D TO PART 240—IDENTIFICATION OF STATE AGENCIES THAT PERFORM NATIONAL DRIVER REGISTER CHECKS

Under the provisions of §240.111 of this part, each person seeking certification or recertification as a locomotive operator must request that a check of the National Driver Register (NDR) be conducted and that the resulting information be furnished to his or her employer or prospective employer. Under the provisions of paragraphs (d) and (e) of §240.111, each person seeking certification or recertification as a locomotive engineer must request that National Highway Traffic Safety Administration conduct the NDR check, unless he or she was issued a motor vehicle driver license by one of the state agencies identified in this appendix. If the certification candidate received a license from one of the designated state agencies, he or she must request the state agency to perform the NDR check. The state motor vehicle licensing agencies listed in this appendix participate in a program that authorizes these state agencies, in accordance with the National Driver Register Act of 1982, to obtain information from the NDR on behalf of individuals seeking data about themselves. Since these state agencies can more efficiently supply the desired data and, in some instances, can provide a higher quality of information, FRA requires that certification candidates make use of this method in preference to directly contacting NHTSA.

[56 FR 28254, June 19, 1991, as amended at 74 FR 68185, Dec. 23, 2009]

APPENDIX E TO PART 240—RECOMMENDED PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCTING SKILL PERFORMANCE TESTS

FRA requires (see §240.127 and §240.211) that locomotive engineers be given a skill performance test prior to certification or recertification and establishes certain criteria for the conduct of that test. Railroads are given discretion concerning the manner in which to administer the required testing. FRA has afforded railroads this discretion to allow individual railroad companies latitude