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NOTICE: Safety Advisory

SUBJECT: Response to Rail Incidents Involving Hazardous Materials

INFORMATION DATE: 06/10/2015

South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff

Rail Safety Division

AGENCY: South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff (ORS), Rail Safety

ACTION: Notice of Safety Advisory; Response to Rail Incidents Involving Hazardous Materials.

SUMMARY: The South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff (“ORS”) in partnership with the Federal Railroad Administration (“FRA”) is tasked to investigate railroad accidents in South Carolina. ORS Rail Safety inspectors are authorized by the Secretary of Transportation of the United States and trained and qualified by the FRA to enter and investigate rail incident and accident sites in South Carolina. The purpose of ORS’ investigation of such occurrences is to promote safety in all aspects of railroad operations.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: ORS Rail Safety inspectors are experienced in the investigation of deadly train accidents. It has been over a decade since ORS partnered with FRA and National Transportation Safety Board (“NTSB”) to investigate the release of sixty tons of chlorine gas in Graniteville, South Carolina that resulted in nine deaths and over 250 injuries. That incident taught ORS Rail Safety staff, as well as the FRA and NTSB many lessons in proper methods and best practices in approaching, entering, and investigating a potentially contaminated accident site.

SAFETY ADVISORY: In the past few months, ORS has investigated accidents in Martin, SC and Trenton, SC. These accident sites contained potentially hazardous materials. ORS Rail Safety is concerned that, in a rush to gather information, first responders and county government staff are putting their health, their lives, and the lives of others in danger by prematurely entering

accident sites. ORS Rail Safety acknowledges the responsibility each county has in protecting lives of its citizens and the personnel on the railroad as well as mitigating the situation to prevent further injury or damage; however, unless the first responders are trained in dealing with hazardous material, they risk putting themselves in danger.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Only first responders who are trained in dealing with hazardous materials rail response should enter an accident site. First responders not trained in responding to rail accidents with hazardous materials should refrain from entering the site and allow railroad personnel that are properly trained to secure the site.

ORS encourages those counties without first responders trained in hazardous materials rail response to contact the South Carolina State Fire Marshall's office, Norfolk Southern, or CSX to procure necessary training.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Tom Allen; State Program Manager Rail Safety, ORS at (803)737-0974 or tallen@regstaff.sc.gov