



Transport Canada limits work hours, requires fatigue intervention for railway employees

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By [Jim Wilson](#)

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Transport Canada has updated the *Work/Rest Rules for Railway Operating Employees* first introduced in 2011 to better reflect the latest science on fatigue management and keep Canadians working or living near railways safe.

Under the new rules, rail employees' length of duty period will be limited to 12 hours, down from 16. It also requires operators to provide fatigue assessment and intervention measures for employees whose shifts end during overnight hours.

Transport Canada also limited employees' work hours to a maximum of 60 hours per seven days, 192 hours over 28 days and 2,500 hours per year.

In February, [Teamsters Canada and Canadian National Railway \(CN Rail\) ratified a three-year agreement that focuses primarily on worker safety, specifically with regards to crew fatigue and hours of work.](#)

“Rail safety remains my top priority. I would like to thank the railway industry, as well as unions for their contribution to the updated *Duty/Rest Rules for Railway Operating Employees* based on the principles of fatigue science,” said Marc Garneau, minister of transport. “The new rules represent a historic improvement over the existing framework and incorporate modern and evidence-based fatigue management principles to a whole sector of the transportation industry. My department will continue to engage with unions and the railway industry on ways to further address the risks of operator fatigue.”

The new rules also increased rail employees’ rest periods at home from six hours to 12 hours and rest periods while away from eight hours to 10 hours. It also allows employees 32 hours of time away from work with two eight-hour periods for freight railway operations every seven days.

The adjustments on rest periods are based on time spent deadheading. It came after Transport Canada defined the difference between commuting time and deadheading.

“In consideration of the significant changes required under these rules, the requirements regarding the length of work and rest periods will take effect in 30 months from today for freight railways, and in 48 months from today for passenger railways, to ensure implementation,” according to Transport Canada.

Transport Canada also now requires railway companies to complete their Fatigue Management Plans within 12 months and implement the Fitness for Duty provisions within 24 months.

Previously, [Transport Canada issued a new Ministerial Order under the Rail Safety Act to restrict train speeds based on cold temperature conditions](#), instead of restricting train speed based on a winter date range as required in the previous Ministerial Order. Earlier, [it released the 2020 edition of its Emergency Response Guidebook](#).

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