

The Carriers go on the Offensive

Throughout the course of the 1980s and 1990s, the rail carriers sought -- and won -- drastic cuts in the ranks of train and engine service employees. Not content with reductions in crew size from four or five train crew employees to just two, the carriers have, since 2004 made clear their intentions to reduce the size of train and engine crews to just a single employee. In fact, they are already conducting some operations with a lone worker.

"All train and engine service positions should be consolidated ... the work formerly performed separately by the train and engine service positions be performed by 'qualified transportation employees' ...crew size shall be based on operational needs as determined by the railroad..."

From the Section 6 Notice of the NCCC. November 1, 2004

Yard Operations

With the unions divided and in disarray after the failed merger attempts, the rail carriers were able to implement Remote Control Operations (RCO) by 2003. It was only a matter of time that the carriers would begin to assign a lone employee to RCO jobs. Not satisfied with having eliminated the yard engineer position on thousands of switch and industry jobs across the country, the carriers now want the conductor (or "yard foreman") to do it all -- set up the work, run the locomotive, make the joints and cuts, throw the switches, ride the cars, set the hand brakes -- with no assistance whatsoever, even when the going gets tough. Without a helper, s/he endures far greater stress including stress on the knees, back, etc. each and every shift.

"No conditions exist where one-person operations are safe..."

From a joint petition filed with the FRA by the UTU and the BLET concerning lone employee crews performing RCO work. June 2009.

Road Operations

In 2004, the National Carriers Conference Committee (NCCC), -- the umbrellas group that bargains collectively on behalf of the nation's most powerful carriers, proposed to the unions of the operating crafts -- the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLET) and the United Transportation Union (UTU) the elimination of the respective crafts of engineer and conductor and their replacement with that of "transportation employee". More sinister, the carriers proposed that they alone determine the size of the train crew and be allowed to operate with alone employee. In 2007, the carriers won contract language that permits RCO to be used in road operations.

Together with new language governing the position of road "utility conductor", the carriers may choose to launch an offensive at any time to eliminate the standard two employee crew on road trains and begin universal single employee road operations. We believe that this is in fact their intent.

RWU's Position on Train Crew Size

Railroad Workers united takes a principled stand on the issue: RWU insists upon a minimum of two employees on every job, both in the yard and on the road. And we call on the unions of the operating crafts to join us in taking this stand. We believe that single employee operations are a menace and should be eliminated immediately where they exist, and forcefully opposed where the carriers seek their implementation. Here's why:

- Single employee train & engine operations -- in fact ANY single employee operation -- is inherently unsafe and dangerous.
- When workers are on their own -- especially those in train and engine service who are often far away from any other co-workers or means of support -- the chance of catastrophic injury or death dramatically increases.
- Doing the job of what was formerly performed by two workers -- especially in yard operations -- will lead to a dramatic increase in stress, including stress upon and damage to the knees, back, etc.
- The quality of work life is drastically reduced for workers when forced to work alone. Spending your entire work life, year after year, all alone would no doubt lead to higher stress levels, depression, and lower job satisfaction. (It is common knowledge that solitary confinement is a way to "break" prisoners).
- The opportunity for poor decision making escalates when working alone. Multiple worker crews have the advantage of bouncing ideas off of each another, consulting one another about the operating rules, and counselling good judgement and safety when in awkward, unusual and/or potentially hazardous situations. Employees working alone have no such support.
- Union power and solidarity would be drastically eroded. It is bad enough that railroaders already work in isolated environments at all hours of the day, spread out across the terminal (yard) or across the division (road). Working every day in solitary, in isolation from one another can only result in a further break- down in solidarity and a decline in union power.

***If you agree that single employee operations must be stopped, please join with Railroad Workers United and thousands of train and engine service employees across North America and fight back!
See the back of this leaflet for some ideas to get you and your co-workers started.***

How You Can Help Stop Single Employee Crews

To succeed in this campaign to oppose single employee operations, we need the input and participation of all railroad workers, and their family members too! Here's just a few things that you can do:

- ◆ Make copies of this leaflet and distribute them to your co-workers
- ◆ Write your Congressman and Senators..
- ◆ Talk to your fellow workers about the issue and the need to fight against single employee crews.
- ◆ Bring the issue to your local union for support and endorsement.
- ◆ Make a financial donation to help pay for flyers like this one.
- ◆ Join Railroad Workers United and help us build the movement for unity, democracy, solidarity, and action!
- ◆ See the RWU website at www.railroadworkersunited.org for more

Sign Me Up!! I want to join Railroad Workers United

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Email Address _____

Union _____ Local # _____ Employer _____

Terminal _____ Years of Service _____

Union Position _____

I'd like to join for (check one):

1 year \$50.00 2 Years \$90.00 3 Years \$120.00

Clip and mail together with your dues to:

RWU Secretary P.O. Box 2131 Reno, NV. 89505

OR join on-line at www.railroadworkersunited.org

National Campaign to Stop Single Employee Train Crews



RAILROAD WORKERS UNITED

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