

Question and Answers

Iowa Contractor: Obtaining Your Crossing Information

Go To Webinar February 18th, 2016

* A number of questions received pertained to issues unrelated to crossing information and data sheets. While this information is not directly related to the data sheet webinar, all questions were captured and provided in the lower section.

Q 1: What is the definition of a crossing?

A: A railroad crossing is a point where the railroad tracks cross, either above, below or at-grade with the roadway surface. Not all projects will contain railroad involvement or a railroad crossing within the limits.

Q 2: Is there a pdf of these webinar pages available?

A: The presentation will be made available by the Office of Contracts on the website to view with the power point slides.

Q 3: Does the information on the FRA Website indicate if slow orders are in effect, train speed, and if flagmen are appointed by railroad?

A: No, neither the Data Sheets nor FRA website will indicate if there are slow orders or flagmen appointed by the railroad. The FRA website will provide the train speed for that crossing location.

Q 4: What about projects that run parallel to the rail? Will you still provide the nearest FRA crossing number?

A: Yes, the Plan Set Title Sheet will provide you with the FRA Crossing Number closest to your project site if the railroad runs parallel to the roadway.

Q 5: What additional time will this add to obtaining my railroad information?

A: This question was answered by a participant. Paraphrasing the participant's answer...“During just the last few minutes I have downloaded the app onto my phone, used it to find the crossing near my location, and got the two page crossing report from the FRA on those crossings around me”... Also, a demonstration of obtaining the data using the FRA website was done during the webinar, taking less than 5 minutes in total time.

Q 6: By shifting the responsibility of obtaining railroad crossing data to the contractor, will this allow the Iowa DOT more resources to align RR flagger requirements to get a more uniform approach between each individual railroad company?

A: While this will reduce resources needed to prepare the Data Sheet information, it will not directly provide the Iowa DOT the ability to achieve a uniform approach between the railroad companies. It is important to note, each railroad operates as an independent business and the Iowa DOT will continue to work with the railroads to encourage practices that create similar operations, forms, and requirements.

Q 7: Slow Orders, speed, flagmen, passenger vs. freight trains are all items that underwriters use to underwrite Railroad Protective Liability. Without this information, the contractors will

pay a higher premium. Is there any way to obtain without contacting the railroad for each project?

A: From the list of items in this question, the number of passenger trains, the number of freight trains and speed are the only items currently provided in the railroad Data Sheets. This information can also be obtained directly from the FRA website at the link provided for crossing information. Information on Slow Orders and flagmen would continue to be information provided directly from the railroad.

Q 8: Why should I contact the railroad for information on the crossing?

A: The railroad is the most accurate source of information on train operations for a particular crossing location. The specification provides information on when to contact the railroad.

Non-Data Sheet Questions

Q 9: Will there be a separate bid item for Railroad Flagger costs?

A: No, there is not a bid item for Railroad Flagger Costs. There is only a bid item for Railroad Protective Liability Insurance coverage.

Q 10: Will the specifications tell the cost of flaggers?

A: No, the Data Sheet nor the FRA Website provides the cost of flaggers for the railroad. Information on the flagger rate of pay can be found in the specification document either as a DS or SP for the railroad.

Q 11: Is the Iowa DOT going to continue utilize A+B for bidding railroad flagger days to handle railroad flagging requirements?

A: Currently only the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) specifications utilize the A +B for bidding railroad flagger days. This will be described in the Developmental Specification for the particular project.

Q 12: Because a contractor does not have the option to utilize alternative flagger services, what is the reason to not reimburse the contractor for actual railroad flagger costs?

A: Recently the Iowa DOT has reviewed the railroad flagger costs and has started to incorporate in the railroad specifications provide for a portion of reimbursement to the contractor for the daily flagger rate of pay by change order. This value varies by the railroad specification. The Iowa DOT believes this will continue to encourage the Contractor to complete work involving the railroad in an expeditious manner.

Q 13: Can you go over how a contractor would prepare an estimate for daily flagger costs for railroads other than Union Pacific?

A: The project information, site conditions, and crossing information are all pieces of information that could factor into calculating the daily flagger costs for all railroads, including the Union Pacific. The calculation would vary on how the Contractor plans their schedule and completion of the project in relation to the railroad operations.

Q 14: Will there always be a bid item when RR protection is needed?

A: Yes, if the project has railroad involvement then a bid item will be listed for Railroad Protective Liability Insurance as a lump sum item.

Q 15: How do we find out about the training for employees and badges required?

A: The Railroad's Contractor Safety Training requirements are listed in the specification document for that particular railroad. This will be either in the form of a Developmental Specification (DS) or Special Provision (SP). There are currently different types of Contractor Safety Training being requested from the different railroads.

Q 16: Who is responsible for getting right of entry permits? The Contractor or the Contracting Authority?

A: Currently we have two railroads that request a Right of Entry (ROE) permit. The Contractor must use the ROE provided with their Developmental Specification as the authorized ROE form to submit to the Railroad.