



TWO BELLS
 The occasional newsletter of the
 Operations Department of the
 Pennsylvania Trolley Museum

August 2014

<http://myptm.info/>

Operations Schedule
 Operating Policies & Procedures
 Operating Orders
 Operations Department Forms
 Log In Required



Play table to keep the little ones occupied. S Becker photo

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Dennis F. Cramer - Editor



Railroading is a Dangerous Profession

Chris Walker, Rick Hannegan, Dennis Cramer

Over the past three years, the Federal Railroad Administration reports an average of over 4,000 accidents and deaths a year by employees on duty. This does not include trespassers, grade crossing accidents or other non-employee events - just professionals on the job. Your first thoughts are, *why include this here? We are a museum.*

A 20 year volunteer at one of our sister railway museums in Wisconsin was killed while on duty in mid-July. The local sheriff's department reported that the 66-year-old woman killed in the accident fell beneath a moving locomotive. Authorities commented that it appeared that the volunteer slipped or lost her balance, fell, and was run over.

The exact details leading to the incident are unclear at this time, but when the various investigatory agencies have completed their work, there'll no doubt be an assessment of blame and a number of 'recommendations' on how to minimize this type of event from happening again. We sympathize with her family and friends.

Nick Krewer, Superintendent of Operations at Illinois Railway Museum put it succinctly when he observed: "Everyone involved in museum and tourist rail operations (everywhere, not just at IRM) needs to stand back, take a deep breath and consider how they work and act around rail equipment....this stuff doesn't know it's in a museum...it's just as big, just as heavy and will kill you just as dead if you're not paying attention. A moment's inattention can cost you more than you could ever imagine. Let this be a (very hard) lesson for the rest of us. And let's be careful out there!"

While we don't operate trains at PTM, the wheel-rail interface of a trolley can be just as deadly as that of a locomotive. And while a trolley is much lighter, it's still capable of inflicting a deadly force if you happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

It has been the observation of the Operations Department that many PTM members have become increasingly lax when it comes to understanding of and adherence to safety rules.

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Railroading is a Dangerous Profession

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A few examples:

Non-revenue (and after-hours) operators who neglect to return switches to the normal position.

An operator who neglected to turn the controller off after the pole left the wire.

Another operator got off his car and went to put the pole on the wire and it started to move. We came very close to a fatality that day, not to mention severely damaging two pieces of equipment.

Excessive speed while on approach to North Main Street crossing.

Excessive speed while negotiating switches and yard tracks.

Inattention while negotiating wire frogs - numerous dewirements leading to damaged trolley poles and overhead.

Various members were recently seen riding the front of WP-1.

There are too many "helpful" people on the ground when 89 is used to shuttle dead cars. It only requires a crew of two – not a cast of thousands.

Within the past 6 months, two Memphis trolleys caught fire and were heavily damaged. During training this year we stressed review of fire extinguisher locations on each car before placing a car in service. Do you do that as a crew?

No one could correctly answer the question of how to stop a car if the brakes fail. It was suggested the crew review the procedure, with the pole off the wire, before starting the day. Do you do that as a crew?

Accidents are not planned, they happen at the most unexpected times. We cannot predict what would happen if an air car lost its brakes after leaving Arden Loop and the crew did not know how to stop it.

We stress prototypical operation as much as is practical. "Real" operations live and breathe safety – the consequences for unsafe actions range from time off to discharge – to lengthy hospital stays and even death.

So the department is asking, or perhaps demanding, that everyone associated with the operation of our museum railway stop and smell the reality of acting safely – and setting aside the actions normally associated with "railfans."



Situational Awareness

Approximately one week after the previous article on safety was written an incident occurred at our museum that could have had dire consequences. It is being reported here, not to place blame, but to remind everyone that things happen and all crew members must remain alert at all times. The following is from Scott Becker, with some editing by Dennis Cramer.

Recently P&WCT 78 was heading inbound from County Home Siding towards Richfol on a regular trip. The front truck stayed on the mainline and it's rear truck went to the Car House lead. The car was stopped before any serious damage was done. After the incident, the Museum Road switch point was still properly positioned to Arden and Scott Becker tried moving it manually, it worked properly. There are fresh marks in the concrete that show the rear truck jumped to the Car House lead track.

Bruce Wells showed up just when Scott Becker did and they inspected the motor leads and brake rigging and saw no damage. There were no injuries. Bruce carefully backed the car to County Home Siding and then tried it again towards Arden. It tracked normally. Scott decided to put 78 away on Track 11 so Bernie could look over the equipment carefully. Dan Bower examined the switch and found nothing out of the ordinary.

Please remain alert!



We Need Your Assistance

You probably have noticed quite a few emails in your inbox from Lynne stating the need for operators. We are having a problem meeting our staffing needs and want to know what we can do to entice you into being a member of the operating crew on a more regular basis. We are currently open 167 days a year, which means we need, with a minimum of 2 operators per shift, 334 operators to cover the shifts. This does not include special events. We have well over 50 revenue & student operators. If each one worked 10 shifts a year, we would have far more than enough people to cover our basic needs.

We would like to know what we can do to get you to sign up as a crew member. Please send your ideas to either [Chris Walker](#) or [Lynne Thompson](#). If you wish to remain anonymous, mail them to Lynne at the museum.

Items of Concern

County Fair is just around the corner. Conductors must be in the proper position to assist passengers on and off cars. Stay alert-if you get tired, let someone replace you. Your health and safety are just as important as that of our guests.

Loops - Notch up and then off, notch up and then off. Do not grind away in the first or second point the whole way around the loop.

Handbrakes - We typically do not use handbrakes, but make sure you know how to release them if need be and to notice if they are applied. Does the car seem like it is dragging? The hand brake wheel should move back and forth freely. It does not hurt to check it just to be sure.

Port Authority of Allegheny County 50th Anniversary

Join your friends on this celebration of PAT's 50th year.

Sunday
October 5, 2014

Click on the link to order your tickets today.



<http://www.showclix.com/event/ptmfantrip>