

News Release



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AMTRAK POSITIVE TRAIN CONTROL ON THE FAST TRACK Will expand safety technology on Amtrak-owned tracks three years ahead of federal deadline

WASHINGTON – Amtrak is moving ahead aggressively to expand and build out its existing and proven train collision prevention safety technology—commonly known as Positive Train Control (PTC)—to cover all of the tracks it owns along the Northeast Corridor (NEC) and on its Michigan Line by the end of 2012, three years ahead of a federal deadline.

“Amtrak has long been a leader in the development and operation of PTC safety technology and we are extending it to cover all of the tracks we own,” said President and CEO Joseph Boardman, noting federal law requires PTC on most tracks where passenger trains operate by the end of 2015.

PTC technology can control train movements to prevent train-to-train collisions, derailments caused by excessive speed and certain human-caused incidents such as misaligned track switches. It can also protect roadway workers by slowing or stopping trains from entering work zones.

To accomplish the self-imposed and accelerated timeline, Boardman said America’s passenger railroad is moving forward on a number of fronts. Amtrak will submit a PTC Implementation Plan to the Federal Railroad Administration by April 16 as required by law, is now designing the build out of its existing PTC system along the NEC, and will begin to expand the PTC system on all of its Michigan Line in 2010. In addition, Amtrak has established a new Deputy Chief Engineer position responsible for PTC implementation and other special projects.

Amtrak also is working with freight and commuter railroads that operate on Amtrak-owned tracks as well as with the host railroads on whose tracks Amtrak trains operate to ensure PTC systems being deployed across the country are interoperable. Interoperability is essential to maintain safety as freight and passenger trains pass from one PTC system to another.

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Boardman explained Amtrak presently has two PTC systems that have been successfully operated for years. The Advanced Civil Speed Enforcement System (ACSES) is installed on many sections of track along the NEC between Washington, D.C. and Boston and will be built out so all remaining Amtrak-owned sections are equipped with it. Also, Amtrak is working with its partners that own other portions of the NEC to assist them with their PTC plans so they are compatible with ACSES.

The Incremental Train Control System (ITCS) is currently installed on most of the Amtrak-owned Michigan Line between Kalamazoo, Mich., and Porter, Ind. In 2010, ITCS will be installed on the last two remaining sections of track located on the western and eastern ends of the line between New Buffalo, Mich., and Porter, Ind., and between Oshtemo and Kalamazoo.

About Amtrak

As the nation's intercity passenger rail operator, Amtrak connects America in safer, greener and healthier ways. Last fiscal year (FY 2009), the railroad carried 27.2 million passengers, making it the second-best year in the company's history. With 21,000 route miles in 46 states, the District of Columbia and three Canadian provinces, Amtrak operates more than 300 trains each day—at speeds up to 150 mph (241 kph)—to more than 500 destinations. Amtrak also is the partner of choice for state-supported corridor services in 15 states and for several commuter rail agencies. Visit Amtrak.com or call 800-USA-RAIL for schedules, fares and more information.

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