

Rail Safety Inspector - Motive Power and Equipment

The State Rail Safety Inspection Program ensures compliance with federal and state safety regulations to help reduce the number of rail accidents. This important program ensures that railroad tracks and equipment are operating safely within Minnesota. MnDOT's Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations currently employs one Rail Motive Power and Equipment Inspector.

What does the motive power and equipment inspector do?

The Rail Motive Power and Equipment Inspector conducts inspections of railroad company locomotives and freight cars for mechanical compliance. This inspector is responsible for the improvement and advancement of railroad safety in areas related to design, construction, inspection, maintenance and use of railroad rolling stock and related accessories.

Significant duties include:

- Carry out impartial and uniform application of the laws, rules, regulations, orders and standards pertaining to freight and passenger railroad equipment
- Make periodic inspections and observations that provide assurance that freight railroad cars, locomotives and passenger rail equipment are operational and in compliance with Federal safety standards
- Inspect and observe tests and component parts of railroad equipment during and prior to assembly and installation to determine whether such parts are suitable for the intended service

What are some important things to look for?

- Flanges that hold wheels in place on the track which are not the proper height and thickness
- Compromised air brake systems
- Defective or missing safety appliances such as ladders, handholds and lighting
- Freight car safety and couplers that are cracked, worn or at improper height

Why is this work important?

The goal of this inspection program is to ensure safe operating and mechanical practices in the railroad industry to promote railroad safety as it relates to employees, passengers and the general public. Monitoring the railroad's 100% compliance to federal and state safety regulations is the last line of defense before a train departs for its destination.

