



# BROTHERHOOD OF LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS & TRAINMEN

*GENERAL COMMITTEE OF ADJUSTMENT –  
Canadian National/Wisconsin Central Ltd - Fox Valley & Western Ltd*

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## **RE: Engineer Training**

Doug Mandalas – Labor Relations  
Canadian National Railway  
17641 South Ashland Avenue  
Homewood, WI 60430-1345

It has come to this office's attention that several engineers have recently been instructed, under protest, to allow engineer trainees to *operate* their trains.

In these instances, the engineers were not comfortable with the role of trainer in and of itself. As you know, the skill sets needed to teach effectively are quite distinct from the skill sets being taught. A good engineer is not necessarily an effective teacher. It is unrealistic to expect an otherwise good engineer to perform his job optimally when unrealistic demands unrelated to his basic duties, as defined in Article 1 of the Schedule Agreement, are thrust upon him over his reasonable protest. Article 15 (D) of the Schedule Agreement manifests this practical reality:

“Engineer Trainees will receive on-the-job instruction from Locomotive Engineer Trainers selected by the Company in consultation with the BLE Local Chairman. Engineers selected as Trainers should exhibit exemplary knowledge of locomotive operation and train handling and **demonstrate the ability to effectively communicate such skills to Trainees.**” (all emphasis added)


The above quoted provision clearly indicates the Parties' intent to carefully select trainers with due consideration given to their ability to teach. Obviously, an individual who is not comfortable in this role will not be suitable, and should not be chosen. To do otherwise violates Article 15 (D). The above quoted rule also requires the Carrier to make the Local Chairmen part of the selection process. This has not been done.

Furthermore, regardless of whether or not the trainer was properly selected and put in charge of a trainee, it is patently unsafe in any instance to require the trainer to allow any trainee he is not comfortable with to actually operate the train. The logic of this is so obvious, and the safety implications so grave, that we simply cannot fathom why any Carrier officer would knowingly place the exercise of raw authority over safety and common sense.

To make matters worse, the engineer trainees involved in these instances were very new to the railroad and not at all familiar with the territories involved, much less the basic elements of train handling and, in some instances, railroading itself. The fact that this is becoming an issue indicates that the Carrier's desire to truncate the training of both new hire conductors and locomotive engineers is bumping up against the practical limitations of what an individual needs to be a proficient operating employee.

To comply with Article 15, the Carrier must only assign trainer duties to engineers who have been selected in accordance with the rule, and it is unsafe to require any trainer to allow a trainee to operate a train until the trainer is satisfied that the trainee can do so safely. Please feel free to contact me at any time if there is anything the Organization can do to facilitate the Carrier's compliance with the Agreement in this regard.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John W. Reynolds". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John W. Reynolds  
General Chairman – CN/WC, BLET

Cc: Marcus Ruef – BLET-VP  
John Klaus – General Manager  
BLET Local Chairman