



C³RS Frequently Asked Questions

- **What is C3RS?** C3RS stands for Confidential Close call Reporting System. This is a federally funded research project designed to improve safety practices based on a condition or incident with potential for more serious consequences. Parties involved in the project include the BLET, UTU, ATDA, NJT, FRA and DOT.

What is considered a close call?

For C3RS, close calls are defined as events that:

- Have the potential for serious safety consequences. For example, a train in dark territory that proceeds beyond its limits of authority, a train that passes a stop and proceed signal without stopping, or a train that exceeds a speed restriction.
- Happen frequently, but have low consequences. For example, fouling a track by crossing too close in front of moving equipment during switching operations, or opening doors not on the platform.
- Run through switch as described in IMOU article 6.4

What does IMOU stand for?

IMOU stands for "Implementing Memorandum Of Understanding," which is legally-binding document that cooperates with the existing collective bargaining agreement and outlines how the C3rs is going to work here at NJT. The memorandum was developed by local representatives of the BLET, UTU, ATDA, NJT, FRA and DOT.

- **How do I turn in a C3RS report?** A secured 1-800 number will be posted for your use in making out a C3RS report
- **Why should I turn in a C3RS report?** By turning in a C3RS report, you will supply data that will help improve safety on the railroad.
- **Who am I talking to when I call my C3RS report in?** You will be talking to a RSAT (Rail Safety Analysis Team) these are data collectors for BTS and experienced railroad employees. They are located in Washington DC and are confidentiality trained. If no one is available, you will leave your information on a secured answering machine and receive a call back to confirm.
- **Who does my C3RS report protect?** Your C3RS report protects co-workers assigned to the job connected to the incident you are reporting this includes dispatchers and yardmasters.
- **What happens after I call in my report?** after you confirm your initial report with an RSAT, you will need to complete and mail in a written C3RS report form in three business days, including times you are available for



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interview. The form will go to a RSAT who will prepare for the telephone interview with you and call you at one of the times indicated.

- **Where do I get a C3RS report form?** You can get a C3RS report form at all signup locations and are available from PRT tier two members. Forms are also available on the C3RS website closecallrail.org
- **What are the boundaries of NJT C3RS pilot project?** The boundaries of the C3RS pilot project are defined as all NJT owned and/or operated territory, including the Southern Tier, Pascack Valley line, and Princeton line.(excluding Amtrak and Conrail territories)
- **Will dispatchers be covered by the pilot project?**
Yes. The ADTA is a signatory of the IMOU.
- **How will crew members contact dispatchers to ensure crew wide participation in a close call event?** Crew members must use the recorded line on which dispatching receives all incoming call. NJT has committed to not pursuing discipline for that incident if the recording is reviewed at a later time. This includes all close calls reported to BTS.
- **If one member has reported a close call event and has receipt of an accepted report, is the entire crew covered?** Yes. However, the benefits to learning from close calls will increase if all crew members submit a separate report of the event. We recommend every crew member involved in a close call event participate in the reporting process. Remember if your crew member fails to follow through on report/interview you will not be protected.
- **What do I have to tell the RSAT during the telephone interview?** During this interview, you will have the chance to tell the RSAT everything you can remember about the incident with the goal of helping prevent such a situation from happening again. Expect this conversation to last approximately thirty minutes.
- **What is VOLPE?** VOLPE is the research division of the DOT.
- **What is BTS?** The Bureau of Transportation Statistics is a federal third



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party that collects, analyzes, and maintains the confidentiality of C3RS.

- **What will happen when a run through switch is called in?**
 - A crew member will immediately contact the carrier, usually the yardmaster, with the information about the run through switch.
 - The yardmaster will contact the appropriate departments but will not include the names of the crew members.
 - At least one crew member will proceed with a call to C3RS and the completion of the report form/interview.
 - Managers who learn of the event and its participation in C3RS will not subject crew members to D-n-A, statements, or remove them from service.
 - The PRT will receive a de-identified report of the event from BTS, so the amount of information that is known about the event will be limited. A run through switch is a known event, not a true close call, but the process for getting the C3RS report developed and into the PRT's hands remains the same.

- **Does the company ever see my report?**
No.
- **Does the FRA ever see my report?**
No.
- **What is NJT PRT?** The NJ Transit Peer Review Team is made up of your railroad colleagues, a group of people representing unions, the company, and the FRA. It will analyze information provided by the BTS to constructively create a safer work environment for all of us.
- **Are interview times flexible?** Yes. RSAT will be available for your interview at any time of your convenience.
- **Are stop signal violations covered?** No.



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- **Are stop and proceed violations covered?**
Yes.
- **Is there a limit to how many C3RS reports you can have?** No.
- **Is video real time?** Only if viewed at the time of the incident not retrospective.
- **What is real time?** Witnessed by NJT management or railroad employee and reported to NJT management. The employee must be informed (or attempted to be informed) within one hour of the incident.
- **What happens when a passenger calls in a incident?** It is not "real time".
- **Are flagmen covered?**
Yes.
- **Are you paid for time making calls/ or is it considered hours of service?** No. The program is completely voluntary.
- **Are multiple charges for each incident covered?**
Yes.
- **How do I know VOLPE, BTS, and the PRT will keep my incident confidential?** All of these C3RS participants are required to swear their confidentiality within the bounds of the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act (CIPSEA). This makes disclosure of your information a class E felony, punishable by not more than 5 years in prison or a \$250,000 fine or both.
- **Can the company or the FRA punish me later on if they want to?** No.



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- **What is the data supposed to be good for?** By gathering information about what happened and analyzing systems failures before they lead to reportable incidents, we can think through how to prevent them from happening again with potentially more serious results.
- **Can you use C3RS for a rule G violation?**
No. C3RS will not protect you in instances of:
 - Intentional damage to operations or equipment or to injure others individuals.
 - Purposefully putting others in danger
 - Criminal offenses
 - Falsified information
 - Personal injuries and/or train accidents
 - Reports by managers as part of efficiency testing