



J.R. Koonce  
General Chairman

GENERAL COMMITTEE OF ADJUSTMENT

## Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen

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Gateway Western Railway (KCS)

August 4, 2006

Mr. L. W. King  
General Manager  
Canadian National/Illinois Central Railroad  
2151 N. Mill St.  
Jackson, MS 39207

RE: Remote Control Incidents

Dear Sir:

It has been reported to this office that the following four incidents occurred at Jackson, MS during the months of June and July 2006.

- (1) On or about June 8<sup>th</sup> the remote control operator let a car roll through a clear track. The car came out on the south end of the track, jumped a derail and blue flag coming close to hitting a trackman working on the rail. The only thing that kept the trackmen from possibly being injured was an alert conductor on another assignment that warned the trackmen of the danger coming.
- (2) On July 20<sup>th</sup> the remote control operator deactivated his RCO limits so a switching assignment could do work through their RCO limits. The remote control assignment was seen making a backup movement in the deactivated zone with no one in place to protect the leading movement of the shove. In this instance the Yardmaster on duty knew of the incident, yet nothing was done.
- (3) On July 25<sup>th</sup> cars were cut off during an RCO switching operation and the cars derailed. The Carman revealed that the cars derailed due to excessive speed and not a missed coupling as management indicated.
- (4) On July 27<sup>th</sup> an RCO assignment made a backup movement with no one protecting the movement and hit an assignment shoving cars causing a derailment of the remote control engine and three cars. (PICTURE INCLUDED)

Although I do not have the particulars (names and times), my question to you is what, if anything, has been done to investigate these incidents? Locomotive Engineers are held to the highest level of compliance when it comes to adhering to the Rules. Many, many disciplinary (investigation) cases are coming across my desk where Locomotive Engineers were immediately pulled out of service and assessed discipline ranging from 30 days suspension to permanent dismissal from service because the Engineers were involved in a sideswipe or shoving cars resulting in a derailment. (Example, July 1<sup>st</sup> H. G. Wood and July 18<sup>th</sup> B. D. Henson) Yet when remote control incidents occur, management is devoid in its responsibility to conduct investigation(s) or assess discipline in mishaps and/or improper movements.

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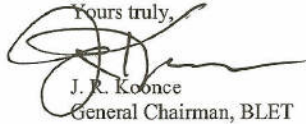
Incidents reported to this office stem from reliable sources and I can assure you that the four (4) incidents cited above that happened at Jackson are not the only incidents that have occurred.

What disturbs me the most is the lack of anything being done. It wasn't that long ago that I was informed of an RCO operator sustaining a personal injury inside a building while spotting cars. There was no investigation and the involved employee was put on light duty. On the other hand, when a Locomotive Engineer is injured getting on and off the engines, or using the restrooms, an immediate investigation is scheduled and discipline is assessed from deferred days to actual suspensions. In this respect I must yell "foul", because there is something very wrong with this picture.

Please advise this office as to what steps are being taken to assure that the safety of all employees are protected; and the rule compliance that is expected by the Company is equally applied to all assignments, including remote control.

Thanking you in advance for your immediate attention to this letter, I remain,

Yours truly,



J. R. Koonce  
General Chairman, BLET

JRK:kb

Enclosures (Pictures)

cc: Roger MacDougall, Senior Director Labor Relations, CN  
Gary Anderson, Manager Labor Relations, CN  
Richard Miller, Superintendent Gulf Coast Zone, CN



