

Dear Valued Customer:

Your business depends on safe, efficient, on-line shipment of your product. We need your help to ensure the safety of our employees and our joint operations while performing switching activities on your property. Twin Cities and Western has been working very hard to improve our overall safety record with a goal of being the safest railway in North America. With this goal in mind, we continue to place strong emphasis on all aspects of workplace safety and want to ensure that our safety record continues to improve. One of the key improvement opportunities involves you, the Customer, our partner. It is the responsibility of all partners to ensure that railway equipment is handled correctly, railcars have handbrakes applied, trackage is maintained to regulatory standards, and the property has no restricted clearance or tripping hazards. Normal winter weather in our area greatly increases the need for both of us to be more vigilant for sudden deterioration to the track structure, tripping hazards, roadway and walkway icing issues and of course dangerously low temps. Your hard work in preventing railway related incidents does not go unnoticed. We have recently improved our customer safety handbook to serve as a guide to safe rail operations, with special focus on customer trackage. We trust you will find this handbook helpful in educating your employees on the hazards of rail operations and will raise your employee's level of awareness of situations that may impact their personal safety, the safety of TCW employees, our community, and the safety and the fluidity of our joint operations.

There are five key areas where we need your assistance:

1. Track Maintenance:

Poor track maintenance practices and/or track not meeting federal or state regulatory requirements can potentially result in a derailment or serious injury to our employees. We will not be able to safely switch your facility if your track is not maintained up to these regulatory requirements and this may result in suspension of service and/or additional tariffs. If your track is not currently under contract to TCW for track maintenance services, please have your trackage inspected at the regulated interval, (as described in the below note) by a qualified track inspector to ensure the overall safety of your facility and timely service. *Note - You are reminded that federal and state (dependent on your location) regulations require monthly inspections be completed on your track by a qualified track inspector. Please make records of these inspections available upon request by TCW or any regulatory inspector.* The risk of derailments on private sidings increases during winter months. These derailments can be caused by the buildup of snow, ice and debris on and around tracks, especially at flangeways at crossings.

Winter Plan Focus: In general, the customer is responsible for snow removal up to the main track switch. The following winter plan has a housekeeping focus and it is important to keep the track and walking areas free of debris and tripping hazards, especially, true before snow arrives.

In winter, we must be focused and remain vigilant on the following:

- Arrange resources in advance, such as snow removal and sand.
- Conduct a fall "housekeeping" inspection of your rail operation prior to the first snow to ensure walking areas are free of debris and tripping hazards.
- Keep flangeways of tracks that run through private or public roads clear of snow, ice and debris at all times.
- This includes sanding or cleaning away ice caused by freezing rain to ensure the area is safe ahead of TCW crews.
- Clear snow build up caused by vehicles crossing over tracks ensuring cleared snow is removed or piled well away from track(s) to prevent sightline obstructions for train crews.
- Clear snow which has slipped from adjacent roof tops onto the siding track.
- Inspect the siding before service by train crews.
- Keep all switches in the plant free of snow, ice and debris (this includes the switch points and the area in which employees stand to throw switches) and ensure that they are draining properly.
- If using heavy machinery to clear snow build up and drifts around your track take special care to not run over or burry restricted clearance or derail signs.
- During severe winter conditions, contact our Customer Service Center to advise that your facility has been cleared of snow. This will help deliver service on schedule.

2. Restricted Clearance Hazards

Serious injuries to TCW employees can occur in customer facilities due to restricted clearances. It is crucial that your facility is free of side and overhead clearance restrictions or those restrictions are protected by designated warning signs. Please ensure these signs do not get buried in snow drifts or knocked/runover if using heavy equipment to clear snow.

Please ensure any gates leading into your property can be opened and properly secured in all weather conditions. This will prevent unsecured gates from swinging closed during switching operations, and contacting TCW employees. Keep in mind that gate posts designed to be pushed into the ground do not work well when the ground is frozen.

Before making any changes to your facility that may create rail clearance restrictions, please review your plans with our TCW engineering (Tim Jeske) at 320-510-0407

3. Loading and Containment

Prior to loading railcars, ensure track protection procedures are in place to protect your employees against moving rail equipment. In addition, it is important that cars are properly loaded and that all doors, hatches and outlet gates are fully closed prior to dispatching any railway car.

- Overloaded or imbalanced cars create a number of transportation hazards.
- Dimensional loads are shipments that are greater than the maximum standard for size, weight, and/or height of center of gravity. These loads place excessive stress on the equipment and track and can cause damage and derailment. To prevent damage, observe the load limit stenciled on the car or identified in the Universal Machine Language Equipment Register (UMLER) and ensure that your load is within the maximum standard for size, weight and height of center of gravity. Contact Customer Service for information on these specifications for your intended route.
- Improper loading, or lack of sufficient securement for most commodities, may result in potential dangerous transportation load shifts.
- Open doors, gates, hatches and other containment fixtures can create employee hazards, equipment damage, and loss of product.
- Before opening the bottom gates on closed covered hopper cars be sure to use the correct gate opening device or tool and release all gate locks (including those with self-locking locks) as this will prevent bending and damage to the gate shaft/opening mechanisms. In addition, ensure the gate opening device is well into the capstan as this will prevent damage to it and do not over-torque the capstan. Damaged gates may not operate properly and the work to repair them could lead to possible TCW employee injury. Same applies as well when closing bottom gates - be sure to use the correct gate closing device, ensure it fits well into the capstan and do not over-torque the capstan as this will also prevent bending and damage to the gate shaft / opening mechanisms. Prior to shipping ensure the bottom gates are fully closed and locked.
- Prior to releasing cars loaded with grain or other consumer food products, spillage should be removed from roofs, end platforms, and other areas of accumulation on the cars. Your attention to this matter results in good environmental stewardship within our communities.
- Grain and similar consumer food products spilled on railway tracks attract wildlife, placing them in harms way.
- Wheel contamination, resulting from spillage of consumer products such as flour, canola oil, cornstarch and similar substances, can cause serious accidents and over speed impacts in yard operations.

- Non-accidental releases of dangerous commodities from improperly secured cars create employee, public, and environmental safety concerns. These are treated quite seriously by both TCW and government regulators.
- Note – please remember to report any upset conditions at your facility that may result in a release of a hazardous substance to TCW promptly as this will ensure our employees do not move into the affected area.
- Emergency response, equipment damage, load adjustments and other containment or environmental costs are billed to the customers

4. Equipment Securement and Handling Requirements

Please remember, railcars should never be moved while handbrakes are applied. A handbrake can apply enough force on the wheels of a railcar to prevent the wheels from turning when the car moves. This causes the wheel to skid along the rail. Skidding a wheel as little as one second can cause small cracks on the tread of the wheel. These small cracks lead to spalling (where little pieces of the wheel tread fall out) and to deeper cracks in the structure of the wheel. Structural damage can go undetected until the wheel suddenly breaks apart.

It is very dangerous to leave handbrakes partially applied. Always fully release hand brakes before shipping.

If this condition is not corrected before railcars are moved, excessive heating could damage the wheel. Customers are reminded that if railcars are moved at your facility, procedures must be developed to prevent these occurrences and to ensure movements are under control at all times. Please review these requirements with your employees who are responsible for handling and securing railway equipment.

For additional information please view the short video entitled “Please Release Me...Let Me Roll” found at the following web address <http://www.aar.com/wdprc/>.

5. Housekeeping Conditions - Trackage

The number one cause of personal injuries to our employees that provide your service is slips, trips and falls. It is crucial for you to ensure that your tracks and facility are free of walking hazards such as snow, ice, debris, material and spills. Please ensure a fall “housekeeping” inspection is completed prior to the first snow.

If you would like to schedule a TCW safety audit, or obtain information on contractors available for an inspection or maintenance of track, and/or information on qualified rail operation training resources, please contact TCW at 320-864-7200. TCW is also committed to ensuring our shippers use proper loading patterns and requirements to adequately secure and prepare their shipments for safe transportation.

If you would like a TCW representative to review your procedures used to protect your track when loading, moving and securing railcars and to provide guidance regarding railway safety please contact your Customer Service Representative.

We believe the above partnership action plans will contribute to ensuring our safety success. Thank you in advance for your focus on safety through teamwork!