



# National Inspection Plan (NIP)

## Review and Update

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*Federal  
Railroad  
Administration*



August 2013



# Background

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- Office of Inspector General (OIG):
  - Rely *less* on individual discretion and *more* on data analysis (December 2004).
  - FRA started developing the NIP as part of the Rail Safety Action Plan (2005).
- A follow-up Government Accountability Office (GAO) audit report reiterated the OIG recommendation (2007).
- Current GAO audit – new recommendations by fall, 2013



# Objective

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Target inspection resources to achieve Government Performance Results Act (GPRA) goals:

→ **Lower Accidents/Incidents Rate**



# What Is NIP?

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- **The National Inspection Plan is a planning process:**
  - Baseline plan uses historical data to estimate how inspection levels affect accident rates.
  - Regional Inspection Points (RIPs) play an important role in the quality of the plan.
  - Regional adjustments incorporate human judgment.
  - NIP is a **guide** for inspection planning that is modified when regional management and inspectors agree an adjustment is needed to improve inspection effectiveness.



# NIP Timeline

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**Apr. - May:** Prepare for next FY's NIP plan - data analyses on new accident, defect, and inspection information.

**Jun. - Jul.:** Update NIP baseline plan based on new data.

**Aug.:** Forward NIP baseline plan to contractor to post online.

**Sep.:** Regions to make adjustments before NIP plan is locked in by October 1 for new FY.

**Oct. 1:** Final NIP plan posted on SecureSite for new FY.

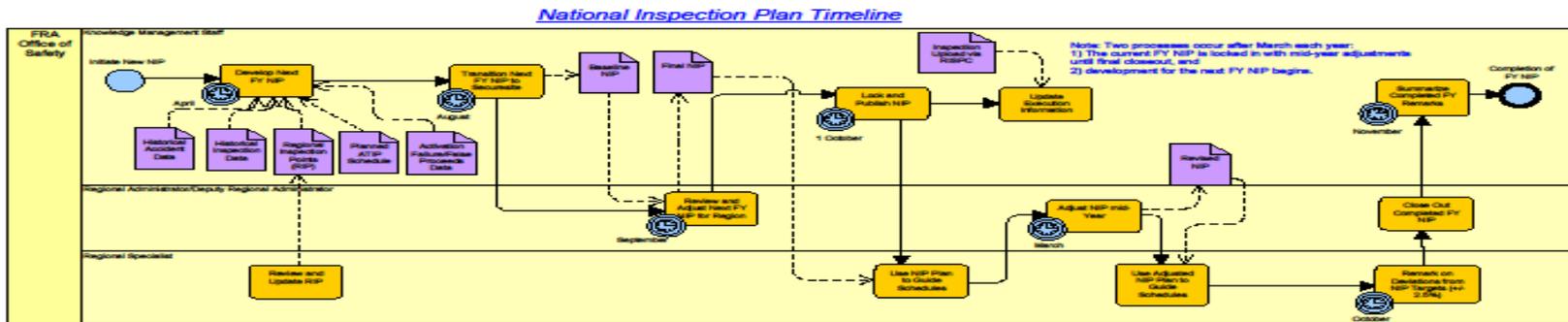
**Nov.:** Review and summarize regional performance with respect to last FY's NIP goals.

**Mar. :** Regions to make mid-year adjustments to NIP plan for unexpected changes (special audits, major accidents, etc.).



# NIP Timeline

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Yes, Virginia, there is a flowchart...



# Who Are the Players?

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## Regions (Region has last word on plan.)

- Review baseline plan and make adjustments.
- Assign inspectors to railroads to meet targets in plan.
- \*\* Specialist's job is to control mix of inspections.

## Inspectors

- Report on areas requiring more attention to regional management.



# NIP Essentials

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- NIP allocates inspections to higher risk areas/railroads.
- NIP does **NOT** change how inspectors conduct their inspections.
- NIP relies on accurate RIP data – also helps in identifying outdated RIP data.



# NIP Essentials (cont.)

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- Region can make adjustments twice a year, including a mid-year adjustment.
- Participate in planning process, including explanations for adjustments due to current developments.
- Region can add remarks at any time, particularly at the end of FY, to explain deviations from NIP goals.
- Monitor plan.



# NIP Essentials (cont.)

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- **Single most important reason for deviations from NIP goals: loss of inspector (due to retirement, illness, special assignment, etc.) and not covering his/her territory for extended period of time.**
- **Also, special audits could take inspectors away from their coverage areas temporarily.**



# Questions

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- NIP Overview:  
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