



# C<sup>3</sup>RS Frequently Asked Questions

For more program information visit  
<https://c3rs.arc.nasa.gov>

## 1. What is considered a close call?

A close call is any condition or event that may have the potential for more serious safety consequences. Some examples of close calls could be, but are not limited to, a train missing a temporary speed restriction, a train striking a derail without derailling, a blue flag not removed after releasing equipment, or proper track protection not provided during track maintenance.

## 2. Who can report close calls?

Employees whose carrier and craft are covered by a signed Implementing Memorandum of Understanding (IMOU) can participate in NASA C<sup>3</sup>RS and receive a waiver from discipline. Anyone submitting a report to NASA C<sup>3</sup>RS will receive confidential treatment.

Managers can submit a report confidentially, but each carrier's IMOU indicates whether or not managers receive a waiver from discipline.

## 3. When should I file a report?

File a report if you are involved in or witness an event that meets the close call definition. Submit the form to NASA within the timeline specified in your carrier's IMOU. Most current IMOUs either require 48 hours or three business days, not counting weekends and Federal Holidays, from the date of the incident to receive a waiver from discipline and some IMOUs describe boundary limits.

## 4. How do I report a close call?

Complete the report form either through secure electronic report submission or fill out the paper form and send by U.S. mail. Postage-paid NASA C<sup>3</sup>RS reporting forms can be found at your on-duty location or download and print a pdf form from the website.

## 5. How often can I submit a report to NASA C<sup>3</sup>RS?

There is no limit to the number of times that you can file a report, but some carriers may limit the number of times you may be eligible for a waiver.

## 6. What is the PRT and do they see my report?

The PRT is the Peer Review Team that your company may have if your carrier's IMOU establishes a PRT. The PRT consists of local representatives from the carrier and FRA at the carrier site. The PRT receives your de-identified report for review. The PRT may recommend corrective actions to the carrier after their independent analysis of the report.

## 7. Where can I find more about the conditions for receiving a waiver?

Participating carrier employees and managers who are covered by an Implementing Memorandum of Understanding (IMOU) may be eligible to receive a waiver from carrier discipline and FRA enforcement in exchange for sharing valuable safety information with C<sup>3</sup>RS.

The IMOUs, developed for each specific site by FRA, rail carriers, and labor representatives, outline how C<sup>3</sup>RS works at each site; defines the rights, roles, and responsibilities of all stakeholders; and

describes how the system will operate. The conditions for receiving a waiver are defined in each carriers' IMOU.

For further information on waiver conditions and what is outside the scope of NASA C<sup>3</sup>RS, please see a member of your carrier's C<sup>3</sup>RS Peer Review Team (PRT) or refer to your company's governing IMOU.

To learn more about reporting, participating railroads, and protection, you may also visit the FRA's website: <https://railroads.dot.gov/human-performance/c3rs/confidential-close-call-reporting-system-c3rs>

**8. Does C<sup>3</sup>RS replace or modify safety processes currently operating at your carrier?**

No. NASA C<sup>3</sup>RS is in addition and complementary to existing safety programs currently at your carrier.

**9. How will my C<sup>3</sup>RS report be used?**

C<sup>3</sup>RS de-identified reports may be used by the railroad community and/or government agencies to develop corrective actions and safety improvements. By sharing your lessons learned, you might prevent others from making the same mistake. De-identified reports are available in the C<sup>3</sup>RS searchable database - DBQT. In addition, your de-identified reports are sent to your carrier's Peer Review Team (PRT) which consists of local representatives from the carrier and FRA. The PRT reviews reports and recommends corrective actions.

**10. What is the DataBase Query Tool (DBQT)?**

The DataBase Query Tool (DBQT) is a searchable database of de-identified Confidential Close Call Reports submitted to NASA through the C<sup>3</sup>RS program. DBQT contains reports from all participating carriers across the USA. New reports are added every month.

**11. What can DBQT be used for?**

DBQT will be used to increase rail safety throughout the entire industry. For example, reports in the DBQT may be used to:

- Proactively identify and address safety vulnerabilities discovered through close call reporting
- Develop and prioritize safety enhancements and corrective actions
- Understand complex safety issues
- Develop training and educational programs

**12. Who can access DBQT?**

DBQT is publicly available on the NASA C<sup>3</sup>RS website. Go to DBQT: <https://c3rs.arc.nasa.gov/dbqt.html>