

criminal offenses, except as specifically provided by this subpart.

§ 219.403 Voluntary referral policy.

(a) *Scope.* This section prescribes minimum standards for voluntary referral policies. Nothing in this section restricts a railroad from adopting, publishing and implementing a voluntary referral policy that affords more favorable conditions to employees troubled by alcohol or drug abuse problems, consistent with the railroad's responsibility to prevent violations of §§ 219.101 and 219.102.

(b) *Required provisions.* A voluntary referral policy must include the following provisions:

(1) A covered employee who is affected by an alcohol or drug use problem may maintain an employment relationship with the railroad if, before the employee is charged with conduct deemed by the railroad sufficient to warrant dismissal, the employee seeks assistance through the railroad for the employee's alcohol or drug use problem or is referred for such assistance by another employee or by a representative of the employee's collective bargaining unit. The railroad must specify whether, and under what circumstances, its policy provides for the acceptance of referrals from other sources, including (at the option of the railroad) supervisory employees.

(2) Except as may be provided under paragraph (c) of this section, the railroad treats the referral and subsequent handling, including counseling and treatment, as confidential.

(3) The railroad will, to the extent necessary for treatment and rehabilitation, grant the employee a leave of absence from the railroad for the period necessary to complete primary treatment and establish control over the employee's alcohol or drug problem. The policy must allow a leave of absence of not less than 45 days, if necessary for the purpose of meeting initial treatment needs.

(4) Except as may be provided under paragraph (c)(2) of this section, the employee will be returned to service on the recommendation of the substance abuse professional. Approval to return to service may not be unreasonably withheld.

(5) With respect to a certified locomotive engineer or a candidate for certification, the railroad must meet the requirements of § 240.119(e) of this chapter.

(c) *Optional provisions.* A voluntary referral policy may include any of the following provisions, at the option of the railroad:

(1) The policy may provide that the rule of confidentiality is waived if—

(i) The employee at any time refuses to cooperate in a recommended course of counseling or treatment; and/or

(ii) The employee is later determined, after investigation, to have been involved in an alcohol or drug-related disciplinary offense growing out of subsequent conduct.

(2) The policy may require successful completion of a return-to-service medical examination as a further condition on reinstatement in covered service.

(3) The policy may provide that it does not apply to an employee who has previously been assisted by the railroad under a policy or program substantially consistent with this section or who has previously elected to waive investigation under § 219.405 (co-worker report policy).

(4) The policy may provide that, in order to invoke its benefits, the employee must report to the contact designated by the railroad either:

(i) During non-duty hours (i.e., at a time when the employee is off duty); or

(ii) While unimpaired and otherwise in compliance with the railroad's alcohol and drug rules consistent with this subpart.

§ 219.405 Co-worker report policy.

(a) *Scope.* This section prescribes minimum standards for co-worker report policies. Nothing in this section restricts a railroad from adopting, publishing and implementing a policy that affords more favorable conditions to employees troubled by alcohol or drug abuse problems, consistent with the railroad's responsibility to prevent violations of §§ 219.101 and 219.102.

(b) *Employment relationship.* A co-worker report policy must provide that a covered employee may maintain an employment relationship with the railroad following an alleged first offense