

# **This defines the penalty application, switching limits not yard limits determine the entering and leaving of a yard for RO penalties**

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## **Switching Limits and Yard Limits**

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This week's field communications message focuses on the difference between switching limits and yard limits.

Switching limits are negotiated through the collective bargaining process. That being the case, neither party, management nor the unions, has the right to unilaterally change switching limits.

Negotiated switching limits create boundaries within which yard work can occur. Yard crews perform the majority of service inside these negotiated switching limits, while road crews perform the majority of their work outside these limits. For example, at Galesburg, Illinois, the negotiated switching limits are: BN line to Creston - MP 172.0, BN line to Quincy - MP 168.2, BN line to Peoria - MP 2.25, BN line to Chicago - MP 159.0, BN line to Savanna - MP 5.0, SF line to Fort Madison - MP 185.0, and SF line to Corwith - MP 172.5. These limits are precisely identified in a collective bargaining agreement.

For the most part, yard crews must perform their work within the negotiated switching limits. If a yard crew performs work outside the negotiated switching limits, the yard crew may be eligible for a penalty payment.

There are two exceptions: A yard crew can go outside the negotiated switching limits up to twenty miles to serve an industry. A yard crew can **also** go beyond the negotiated switching limits up to twenty-five miles to perform hours of service relief. In each case, the mileage is measured from the negotiated switching limits that were in existence prior to 1978.

Conversely, road crews, or through freight crews, should not be required to perform work within switching limits, other than those moves specified by the national agreements. While the national agreements generally outline what work can be performed inside and outside these boundaries, it is important to understand that there may also be location-specific agreements that apply at your particular location.

Unlike switching limits, yard limits are not negotiated, and the boundaries are established by local management to take advantage of operating efficiencies relating to main track authority requirements. For example, yard limits may be established by management at a station between MP 10 and MP 15. Within these yard limits, trains and engines can use the main track without obtaining a formal document, such as track warrant, from the train dispatcher. This reduces the number of communications between the train dispatcher and crews needing to use a main track within yard limits

In summary, switching limits are negotiated and define where yard crews and road crews can work, while yard limits are determined by management and have to do with operating rules.