

ALERT - Severe Storm Delays Rail Service in Pacific Northwest and Mountain States

The weather this past week has wreaked havoc on the nation's rail networks. Especially hard hit are the Pacific Northwest and Mountain States regions. Snowfall, icy rain, and mudslides are all contributing to extensive delays in train service. These adverse conditions, from Eastern Oregon and extending to Iowa, have resulted in broken rails and signal outages, which is taxing the ability of maintenance crews to execute repairs. Road closures across many line segments, on both BNSF and UPRR, are hampering crew transportation.

At Wicopee, OR, the railroad continues to dig out of a mudslide that occurred on January 19 that buried the tracks under several feet of mud. Trains that routinely traverse this corridor (between California and Seattle) are being diverted through Salt Lake City. This compounds the congestion along the east-west Northern corridor.

A derailment near Huntington, OR, that occurred on January 27, also continues to hinder service. Track #1 remains blocked, with no estimated time of re-opening. Trains are moving around on main track #2 and on the siding.

A derailment at Pescadero, ID occurred January 30, blocking both main tracks, further creating a backlog of trains moving through the corridor.

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UPRR has elected to temporarily restrict train operations between Hinkle, OR and Pocatello, ID. UPRR is currently holding in excess of 60 trains between these points and efforts are underway to help mitigate the congestion. The restriction is necessary to restore network fluidity in the Pacific Northwest, and during this time we anticipate delays of up to 72 hours on trains required to operate through the territory. Progress has been hampered over the last 48 hours due to white-out conditions brought on by the snow storms. In a further attempt to alleviate congestion, UPRR is staging westbound trains in two locations: at Nampa, ID, and at Green River, WY. Eastbound trains are being staged at Hinkle, OR for two hours.

As is common in these adverse situations, we will begin to see a domino effect of events negatively impacting the local crew base and creating intermodal asset imbalances (locomotives and railcars) as well. Currently the imbalances are affecting Portland and Seattle, but are expected to impact network operations in Chicago heading into Friday, February 1.

More storms are expected, at least through the weekend, which will further exacerbate service disruptions. High winds and severe cold temperatures in all western states, along the northern corridor and into the Northeast will be cause for reduced train speeds. Inclement weather (rain in lower elevations and snow above 3000') may be cause for flooding and slides in California, Oregon, Washington and Idaho.

We will continue to monitor this situation, and provide updates accordingly.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we work through these dynamic conditions. If you have specific questions, please contact your Pacer Stacktrain Customer Support Representative.

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We appreciate your business.