

TechBriefs

Savannah River National Laboratory

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY • SAVANNAH RIVER SITE • AIKEN • SC

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At a glance

- > Enhanced safety for railcar personnel
- > Provides hands-free operation for switchman
- > Switchman can face in any direction
- > Eliminates the need for switchman to ride on the railcar ladder
- > No railcar modifications required
- > U.S. Patent 8,250,992

Contact Information

Partnering Opportunities

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Railcar Switchman Platform

Engineers at the Savannah River Site (SRS) have devised a new railcar switchman platform for enhanced safety of railroad personnel. The switchman platform is designed to attach to the railcar ladder, providing a stable platform from which the switchman can perform his duties.

Background - Performance Benefits

Under normal operations when railcars are pushed or shoved by the locomotive, a switchman is required to ride on the lead car to flag and provide watch for the locomotive engineer. These functions normally require the switchman to ride on the ladder attached to the side of the railcar. The switchman platform, which can be attached to the railcar ladder, provides a stable platform upon which the switchman can ride in a normal standing position. Performing his duties in a standing position allows the switchman greater stability and a safer position to operate the emergency brake, radio, or provide flag signals to the engineer. The attached handrails allow the switchman to work independently of the ladder and face in any direction.

In addition, the installed platform will comply with most common horizontal and vertical railcar clearances. The configuration allows it to be close to the railcar for horizontal clearances and high enough to clear standard manual switch equipment.

Stage of Development

Savannah River Site has 64 miles of railroad on site and this equipment has been designed, developed and successfully deployed for railroad shipment operations at SRS since 2008. A patent has been filed on this invention with the US Patent and Trademark Office.



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Technology transfer

The Savannah River National Laboratory (SRNL) is the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) applied research and development laboratory at the Savannah River Site (SRS).

With its wide spectrum and expertise in areas such as homeland security, hydrogen technology, materials, sensors, and environmental science, SRNL's cutting edge technology delivers high dividends to its customers.

The management and operating contractor for SRS and SRNL is Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, LLC. SRNS is responsible for transferring its technologies to the private sector so that these technologies may have the collateral benefit of enhancing U.S. economic competitiveness.

Partnering opportunities

SRNS invites interested companies with proven capabilities in this area of expertise to enter into a licensing agreement with SRNS to market this nuclear material detection system. Interested companies will be requested to submit a business plan setting forth company qualifications, strategies, activities, and milestones for commercializing this invention.

Qualifications should include past experience at bringing similar products to market, reasonable schedule for product launch, sufficient manufacturing capacity, established distribution networks, and evidence of sufficient financial resources for product development and launch.

SRNL-L9100-2010-00099



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