Crew

In case of freight trains, crew is booked through Crew Management System (CMS) on the basis of first in and first out for the first week and in subsequent week based on the number of duty hours they performed.

Complexity in Freight Operation

Unlike Passenger Train operations which are time tabled & scheduled, freight operations are dynamic and require constant intervention in all stages viz., examination, empty run to loading point, loading, loaded run to unloading point, unloading. At each of the above stages, the operations are prone to variations like number of sick arising in examination; change in demand by customers; factors affecting loading operations and so on.

Some wagons have competing commodities and demands. For example, BOXN wagons are loaded with coal, clinker etc. When coal demand goes up and there is a power shortage in the country, supply for coal is prioritized and clinker loading gets affected. Similar is the case for BCN, which can carry food grains, bagged cement and variety of other commodities. As loaded freight trains require higher hauling power than empty trains, there arises a continuous need for power balancing. Hence, sometimes freight trains are over powered and sometimes under powered requiring banking.

Loading

A customer wanting to dispatch goods by railway has to register an indent furnishing particulars of commodity; type of wagon required and destination terminal by paying the required Wagon demand registration fee (WDRF). Empties are supplied duly checking for restrictions / quota allotment on the day of supply. Allotment / loading orders are issued in accordance with the priority of registration as per preferential traffic order. Loading order given by the SrDOM is called as Specific Loading Order (SLO).

Freight charges as prescribed in IRCA Goods Tariff Part-1 & 2 of Vol.II are collected duly issuing an RR. All commodities transported by freight trains are grouped in four classes ‘A’, ‘B’ ‘C’ & ‘D’ for assigning priority in allotment of wagons. Apart from the priority SrDOM may give preference for traffic offered in block rakes, traffic covered by contractual obligations and/or guaranteed under specific Schemes, traffic in rakes loaded from a Siding/Goods shed of the station having round the clock working and having mechanized system of loading.

Quotas: In order to regulate the inflow of wagons into areas where facilities are not available to handle the sufficient incoming traffic, ‘quotas’ are fixed for loading of wagons to such areas.

Restrictions: In order to avoid detentions to wagons, whenever unusual occurrence like accident, labour strike, mechanical failures etc. occur, restriction messages are issued by operating department restricting the movement of goods traffic to a particular terminal or station or via a junction or route.

Loaded Train Running

After loading, the loaded trains are run towards its destination, through the 'booked route'. The booked route is usually the shortest route except in few cases, where the freight is paid for a longer route by the customer for various reasons. In order to keep the fare for customer not get affected due to operational constraints in the railway network, in few routes authorized by Railway Board, trains are run via a longer other than booked route. Such routes are called rationalized routes.

Unloading

On reaching the destination, the customer is required to unload the goods from the wagons within a stipulated time, beyond which demurrage charges for detention of stock will be levied. The unloaded material in the railway premises is required to be cleared within a stipulated time, beyond which wharfage charges for material available are levied.

Rebooking: Booking of a consignment after reaching the original destination, without taking delivery, to any other station, is known as rebooking.

Diversion: Diversion means diverting a loaded wagon or rake from a common junction to a new destination. PCOM of the zone in which wagons are physically available is empowered to grant permission for diversion of the wagons / rake.

Delivery of goods short of destination: Delivery of goods short of destination is also treated as Diversion. In case of delivery short of destination, the party should give an undertaking in writing that he will not claim any refund of freight charges for the portion of the journey not covered by the wagon. In this case, diversion fees need not be collected.
The party should affect book delivery, by surrendering the railway receipt and paying all the charges due at the original destination and effect physical delivery of the consignment at short of destination by surrendering a "No-due" certificate issued by the original destination.

Diversion/Rebooking/delivery short of destination on Railway's account:
The railway administration with the consent of the consignee/consignor may permit rebooking/diversion/delivery short of destination of consignments to nearby alternative station for delivery.

Empty Running

In an ideal condition, all freight train runs can be in loaded conditions. But practically empty running happens as there is not always a demand in return direction. Certain special type of wagons for POL, Steel, Coal, Natural Gas, Ammonia, LPG etc. have to be generally run empty back to the loading points. Avoiding or reducing the extent of empty haulage and cross movements of similar type of empty stock requires operating acumen strengthened by advance information, close liaison with customers and some freight incentive schemes. Empty wagons are run to loading points with demand or examination points as per their condition.

Daily Monitoring of Goods Operation

Following are the important goal posts of daily freight operation

i) Loading – All the on hand empty wagons to be loaded are supplied for loading in time to achieve the maximum loading for the day. Empty wagons taken over early in the day shall also be strived to be loaded. Efforts are also taken to ensure a demand pipeline for the next day loading.
ii) Unloading – All on hand inward wagons are placed for unloading in time to achieve the maximum unloading for the day. Inwards taken over early in the day shall also be strived to be unloaded. Wherever possible back loading shall be planned and achieved.
iii) Maximizing handing over of outward & surplus empties to other divisions.
iv) Planning appropriate locomotives to clear wagons from terminals after loading/unloading with minimum terminal detentions.

In order to achieve all this control office in the divisions are required to do the following on a continuous basis

Planning/Forecasting:

Forecasting is done based on odd hours wagon holding duly targeting the above objectives. This brings the requirements for achieving the targets as well as the list of trains that can be run with existing resources. As divisions exchange such information with each other, the forecast can be updated based on expected trains.

DyCHC night shift should chalk out a rough plan in consultation with the adjoining DyCHC. Rough plan must be ready in all respects. Chief controller has to finalize the day's forecast/planning after checking the information, draft plan, and consultation with CHC of adjoining divisions. Copies of the forecast should be sent to SrDOM/DOM. After scrutinizing the same, the SrDOM/DOM gives instructions to CHC for final amendments. All HQ/RB instructions need to be complied. Once finalized, it must be repeated to Central Control.