

2026 RTA Grading Seminar - Fulton, KY - March 16-19

Host Plant: Stella Jones, Fulton, KY

Monday, March 16

5:00 PM Welcome Reception & Introductions

Tuesday, March 17

8:00 AM Welcome/Course overview/Safety Briefing
RTA Tie Grading App & RTA Website & RTA Events App (Course Evaluation Form)
8:15 AM Introduction to Crosstie Defects & Limitations
9:30 AM Break - 15 minutes
9:45 AM Engineering - Rail History, Components & Trackwork
11:15 AM Tie inspection Grading Booth Perspective & Grading 101- Tie grading station videos
11:45 AM Lunch
12:45 PM Grading Video
1:00 PM Reduced Speed Grading Station Quiz & Discussion (Test 1)
1:30 PM Break
1:45 PM Wood Identification Basics/Intro to RTA Species
3:30 PM Break - 15 minutes
3:45 PM Breakout 4 groups Cut Off >Species ID
4:00 PM Big Block Species ID test (groups=oak/hickory, mixed hardwoods, softwoods, excluded)
4:45 PM Review of Day 1>Driven by class needs

Wednesday, March 18

8:00 AM Tree to Track (Sustainability)
8:30 AM Insects, Fungi & Air-Drying Basics
9:00 AM Wood Treating & Treating Demonstration
10:00 AM Break - 15 minutes
10:15 AM Plant Operations Overview & Inspection Points
11:00 AM Review any Species & Defects/Grade Questions
11:30 AM Lunch then Drive to Plant
1:00 PM Facility Tour (1/2 Group)
1- 25 Ties>ID and Grade Practice (1/2 Group)
3:30 PM Answers for Practice ties
4:00 PM Drive back to Hotel

Thursday, March 19

8:00 AM Wood Tie & Timber Procurement/Specialty Products
8:30 AM Review Defects & Specification
9:00 AM Review Species Groupings
9:15 AM Drive to Plant
9:45 AM Instructions for Final Test - Final Questions
10:00 AM Final Test- Ties 26-50 -Grade and ID (1/2 Group)
Treated Tie Inspection (1/2 Group)
11:30 AM Lunch
Noon Answers/Awards/Certificates/Evals/Closing

Adjourn