



Michael Cleary is a Senior Consultant with Engineering Systems Inc. specializing in freight railroad operations. He has more than ten years of railroad leadership experience in safety-critical, continuous-operation freight environments. His experience includes railroad operating practices, rules compliance, yard and terminal operations, crew performance and actions, incident analysis, regulatory considerations, and technical reporting.

Mr. Cleary's background is grounded in direct operating experience with a major Class I freight railroad. He began his railroad career as a conductor and advanced through roles including train master, manager of train operations, and assistant superintendent. Across these positions, he worked in both hump and flat-switching terminal environments, supervised operating crews and frontline managers, conducted operational testing, reviewed operational incidents, and evaluated railroad practices in relation to applicable operating rules and generally accepted industry standards. His work has focused on how freight railroad operations are planned, executed, supervised, and evaluated within complex unionized operating environments.

Prior to his railroad career, Mr. Cleary served ten years in the U.S. Army with the 82nd Airborne Division. That experience established a solid foundation in disciplined leadership, accountability, risk assessment, and decision-making under pressure that continues to inform his railroad and consulting work.

At Engineering Systems Inc., Mr. Cleary supports consulting, litigation, and investigative matters involving freight railroad operations. His work includes review of operating facts and field conditions, evaluation of crew actions and operating decisions, analysis of railroad operating rules and practices, assessment of crew compliance with applicable operating procedures, and evaluation of standard-of-care issues related to railroad operations. He also analyzes event recorder data, crew records, and train handling information in support of derailment investigations and operational assessments. He prepares clear, factual technical analyses for attorneys, clients, and other audiences without railroad operating backgrounds.

Contact Information

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ESi Lincoln Park

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Areas of Specialization

- Freight Railroad Operations
- Operating Practices
- Incident Analysis
- Operating Rules and Regulatory Compliance
- Root Cause Analysis
- Yard and Terminal Operations
- Crew Actions and Field Decision-Making
- Rail Safety and Risk Assessment
- Technical Reporting
- Operational Testing and Compliance Oversight
- Hump and flat-switching terminal operations
- Yard and terminal process improvement
- Crew actions and operating decision analysis
- Safety-critical terminal leadership
- Unionized 24/7 operating environments

Education

BA, General Studies. American Military University

Licenses & Certifications

- Part 107 UAV License
 - Remote Control Operator Instructor (DSRCO)
 - Conductor Certificate (CO)
 - Remote Control Locomotive Operator License (RCL)
 - U.S. Army Jumpmaster School
 - Warrior Leader Course (WLC)
 - Advanced Leader Course (ALC)
 - Military Forensics Course
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Positions Held

Engineering Systems Inc., Lincoln Park, New Jersey

- Senior Consultant, 2026 – Present

CSX Transportation, Selkirk, New York

- Assistant Superintendent, 2022-2026
- Trainmaster, 2017-2019

CSX Transportation, Rocky Mount, North Carolina

- Manager of Train Operations, 2019-2022

CSX Transportation, Cincinnati, Ohio

- Conductor, 2014-2017

U.S. Army, 82nd Airborne Division

- Leadership Roles, 2003-2013
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Professional Affiliations/Honors

Army Commendation Medal (2x)

Army Achievement Medal (3x)

Purple Heart

Combat Infantryman Badge
