



# Memorandum

U.S. Department  
of Transportation

**Federal Railroad  
Administration**

Date: June 15, 1998

Reply to Att. of: MP&E 98-52

Subject: Initial Terminal Brake Tests of MU Commuter Trains

From: Edward R. English  
Director, Office of Safety Assurance and Compliance

To: Regional Administrators, Deputy Regional Administrators,  
Motive Power & Equipment Specialists and Inspectors

Two issues involving initial terminal brake tests of diesel and electric MU trains equipped with RT-5 or similar brake systems require clarification. The first issue is the initial terminal brake test as defined in 49 CFR 232.12 (c-j) can not be performed on MU trains equipped with RT-5 or similar brake systems. The second issue is some commuter railroads operate these trains for up to 20 trips and two days may elapse between initial terminal brake tests.

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) finds that the current brake system operating rules and maintenance standards used by commuter railroads that operate MU trains--in place as of April 9, 1996-- are the equivalent of 49 CFR Part 232.12 (c-j). When inspecting for proper initial terminal brake tests on MU equipment with RT-5 or similar brake systems, motive power and equipment (MP&E) inspectors should ensure that the test is performed in accordance with that railroad's brake system operating rules and maintenance practices in place as of April 9, 1996. Inspectors should notify the MP&E Staff Director of any new or changes to brake system operating rules or maintenance practices. The MP&E Division staff will determine if the new procedures remain the equivalent of the initial terminal test described in 49 CFR 232.12 (c-j).

For diesel or electric MU trains equipped with RT-5 or similar brake systems, the Federal Railroad Administration interprets "where the train is originally made up (initial terminal)" as currently contained in 49 CFR Part 232.12 (a)(1)(i) to be the location from which an MU locomotive is first operated each day. For the purpose of enforcing this interpretation, each day is defined to commence at 12:00 a.m. and movements in process at 12:00 a.m. may continue to destination.

This interpretation means that each diesel or electric MU train equipped with RT-5 or similar brake systems shall receive an initial terminal test that is the equivalent of 49 CFR Part 232.12 (c-j) prior to that train's first departure after 12:01 a.m. each day. This should result in every MU train receiving an initial brake test at least once each day.

#