



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

**Federal Railroad  
Administration**

# Memorandum

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Reply to Att. of: MP&E 98-61

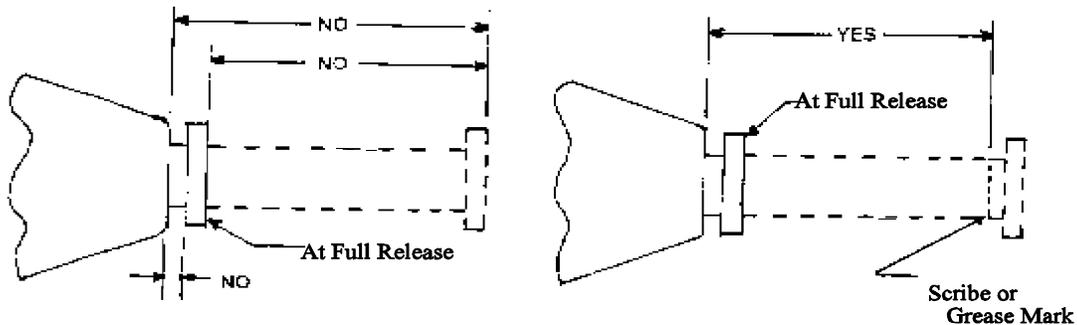
Subject: Measuring Piston Travel

From: Edward R. English  
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To: Regional Administrators, Deputy Regional Administrators,  
MP&E Specialists, MP&E Inspectors

There has recently been several inquiries concerning the proper method for measuring brake cylinder piston travel on freight cars. In order to achieve consistent compliance, the following procedure will be used to measure piston travel.

The actual movement of the piston is the distance that must be measured. To determine this measurement, the longstanding practice of measuring piston travel from the front of the brake cylinder (non-pressure head) to the grease mark on the hollow rod will be used. If a grease mark is not evident, a line scribed on the hollow rod would suffice. If there is confusion as to what the piston travel should be on a particular car, refer to either the badge plate or stenciling located in a conspicuous place near the brake cylinder. The sketches below should clarify this issue.



**YES = Actual Travel Distance**

**NO = Distance not to be included in the Actual Piston Travel**