



Memorandum

U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Railroad
Administration**

Date: August 3, 1998

Reply to Att. of: MP&E 98-71

Subject: Self Propelled Vehicles Considered to Be Locomotives

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

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

Recently, we have had several inquiries about equipment requirements for self propelled vehicles used to haul revenue freight on the main line. Self propelled vehicles are used in a variety of railroad functions. These vehicles include those built by Trackmobile Inc., Shuttle Wagon, Mitchell Equipment Corporation and Brandt Roadrailer.

Section 229.5 (k) states:

Locomotive means a piece of on-track equipment other than hi-rail, specialized maintenance, or other similar equipment

- (1) With one or more propelling motors designed for moving other equipment;
- (2) With one or more propelling motors designed to carry freight or passenger traffic or both; or
- (3) Without propelling motors but with one or more control stands.

A hi-rail vehicle is defined as a truck or automobile with retractable flanged wheels so it may be used on either the highway or track. Specialized maintenance or other similar equipment includes track motor cars, cranes, derricks, pile drivers, ballast cleaners, etc. When self propelled vehicles are used only in the performance of typical maintenance-of-way functions, or if they are used to move cars or equipment within the confines of repair facilities, they are to be considered specialized maintenance equipment and are exempt from many Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) regulations.

When a self propelled vehicle is used to move freight over the railroad, outside the limits established for maintenance-of-way operations and repair facilities, it will be considered a locomotive and must comply with applicable regulations. Even though these vehicles do not resemble a standard locomotive, the purpose for which they are being used requires compliance with 49 CFR Sections 223, 229, 231 and 232.

The self propelled vehicles are unique in construction, appearance and use. Many of these vehicles currently being used have already been modified by the manufacturers (as closely as construction would permit) to bring them into compliance with Federal regulations. FRA acknowledges that this equipment has a place in a well rounded rail transportation system. In an effort to recognize the unique characteristics of these vehicles, FRA inspectors should exercise enforcement discretion and good judgement in analyzing an operation where self propelled vehicles are used for train movements.

The following specifications should be used by inspectors for enforcement guidance:

1. The vehicle glazing material must comply with Part 223.
2. Each self propelled vehicle shall be inspected each calendar day when used and an inspection report and record shall be completed as described in Section 229.21.
3. Each self propelled vehicle shall receive a periodic inspection as described in Section 229.23, and all pertinent data is to be entered on a F6180.49A Locomotive Inspection and Repair Report, which shall be displayed under a transparent cover in a conspicuous place in the cab of the vehicle.
4. The vehicle's air brake equipment must be cleaned and tested as often as conditions require, but not less frequently than required in Sections 229.25, 229.27 and 229.29.
5. The main air reservoir must comply with Section 229.31 regarding either hammer and hydrostatic testing or pre-drilling of the reservoir.
6. Vehicle must meet general Safety Requirements of Section 229.41, 229.43 and 229.45.
7. Fuel safety cut off devices, Section 229.93.
8. The vehicle must have a speed indicator if it is operated at a speed that exceeds 20 mph. Section 229.117.
9. Interior cab noise must comply with Section 229.121.
10. Vehicle headlights must be fully functional and if operated at speeds in excess of 20 mph over one or more public highway-rail crossings, must comply with auxiliary light requirements Section 229.129.
11. Vehicle must be equipped with an audible warning device, Section 229.129.
12. If operated at speeds in excess of 30 mph while hauling cars, vehicle must be equipped with working event recorder in compliance with Section 229.135.
13. Switching steps as defined in Section 231.30.
14. Four horizontal handholds secured to the back and front ends of the vehicle, secured by bolts or other acceptable mechanical fastener. Section 231.30.
15. Vertical handholds painted in contrasting colors and secured by bolts or other acceptable fasteners, Section 231.30.
16. Must be equipped with automatic couplers, to prevent the necessity of a someone going between the vehicle and car for the purpose of coupling or uncoupling, Section 231.30.
17. If conditions warrant, a two-way end-of-train device must be used, Section 232.19 - 25.
18. As with any train movement, the vehicle must be equipped with a brake system that permits the operator to apply and release the brakes on cars being hauled. The brake equipment must also be arranged so that proper air brake leakage tests can be conducted as applicable, Sections 232.12 and 232.13.

Items deemed to be safety related, that can not meet specified requirements, will have to be addressed through the waiver process.

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