

energy action.”¹⁸ FRA has evaluated this final rule in accordance with E.O. 13211 and determined that this final rule is not a “significant energy action” within the meaning of E.O. 13211.

I. Executive Order 13175 (Tribal Consultation)

FRA has evaluated this final rule in accordance with the principles and criteria contained in E.O. 13175, *Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments* (65 FR 67249, Nov. 6, 2000). The final rule will not have a substantial direct effect on one or more Indian tribes, will not impose substantial direct compliance costs on Indian Tribal Governments, and will not preempt tribal laws. Therefore, the funding and consultation requirements of E.O. 13175 do not apply, and a tribal summary impact statement is not required.

J. International Trade Impact Assessment

The Trade Agreement Act of 1979 prohibits Federal agencies from engaging in any standards or related activities that create unnecessary obstacles to the foreign commerce of the United States. Legitimate domestic objectives, such as safety, are not considered unnecessary obstacles. The statute also requires consideration of international standards and, where appropriate, that they be the basis for U.S. standards. This final rule is purely domestic in nature and is not expected to affect trade opportunities for U.S. firms doing business overseas or for foreign firms doing business in the United States.

List of Subjects in 49 CFR Part 229

Penalties, Railroad safety, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

The Final Rule

For the reasons discussed in the preamble, FRA amends part 229 of chapter II, subtitle B of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations as follows:

PART 229—RAILROAD LOCOMOTIVE SAFETY STANDARDS

■ 1. The authority citation for part 229 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 20103, 20107, 20133, 20137–38, 20143, 20168, 20701–03, 21301–02, 21304; 28 U.S.C. 2461 note; and 49 CFR 1.89.

■ 2. Amend § 229.73 by revising paragraph (b) to read as follows:

§ 229.73 Wheel sets.

* * * * *

(b) The maximum variation in the diameter between any two wheel sets (the average diameter of the two wheels on an axle) shall not exceed the following:

(1) Within the same three-powered-axle truck, $\frac{3}{4}$ inch, except that when shims are used at the journal box springs to compensate for wheel diameter variation, the maximum variation may not exceed $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches.

(2) On different trucks on a locomotive that has three-powered-axle trucks, $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches.

(3) For powered axles on locomotives equipped with alternating current traction motors that utilize individual truck or single axle control technology, $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches, with or without shims. For non-powered axles in the middle of two powered axles, this paragraph (b) does not apply.

* * * * *

Issued in Washington, DC, under authority delegated in 49 CFR 1.89.

David A. Fink,

Administrator.

[FR Doc. 2026–17788 Filed 8–28–26; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–06–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

49 CFR Parts 229, 232, and 238

[Docket No. FRA–2025–0130]

RIN 2130–AD24

Amendments to Brake System Maintenance and Inspection Requirements

AGENCY: Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This rule amends mechanical equipment safety standards related to brake inspections for passenger and freight rail equipment and incorporates longstanding waivers for locomotive brake system maintenance and inspection requirements. The amendments are consistent with the mandates of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), which require FRA to review and analyze certain longstanding waivers to determine whether incorporating the waivers into FRA’s regulations is justified, and Executive Order 14219, *Ensuring Lawful Governance and Implementing the President’s “Department of Government Efficiency” Deregulatory Initiative*.

DATES: This rule is effective September 30, 2026.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Gary Fairbanks, Staff Director, Motive Power & Equipment Division, FRA, telephone: (202) 230–9594, email: Gary.Fairbanks@dot.gov; or James M. Mecone, Senior Attorney Adviser, Office of the Chief Counsel, FRA, telephone: (202) 380–5324, email: James.Mecone@dot.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

Consistent with Executive Order (E.O.) 14192, *Unleashing Prosperity Through Deregulation* (90 FR 9065, Feb. 6, 2025), and E.O. 14219, *Ensuring Lawful Governance and Implementing the President’s “Department of Government Efficiency” Deregulatory Initiative* (90 FR 10583, Feb. 25, 2025), FRA is reviewing its regulatory requirements in 49 CFR parts 200 through 299 and repealing requirements that are outdated and redundant.

On July 1, 2025, FRA published a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) to update brake maintenance and inspection requirements contained in 49 CFR parts 229, 232, and 238 by codifying certain waivers to make permanent the safety benefits of these waivers and eliminate uncertainty about potential extensions. 90 FR 28660 (July 1, 2025).

FRA received ten comments in response to the NPRM. Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit,¹ the Commuter Rail Coalition (CRC),² the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRRA),³ and BNSF Railway Company (BNSF)⁴ commented in support of the proposed rule, acknowledging that: codification of the provisions reflects years of equipment testing that demonstrates improved safety and reliability under the waivers; advancements in brake technology reduce the opportunities for development of the types of contaminants that presented reliability challenges for early generation brake valves; and the proposed rule reduces uncertainty and provides cost savings to railroads through the elimination of waiver applications required for railroads to continue utilizing safe and efficient industry standards.

¹ <https://www.regulations.gov/comment/FRA-2025-0130-0009>.

² <https://www.regulations.gov/comment/FRA-2025-0130-0007>.

³ <https://www.regulations.gov/comment/FRA-2025-0130-0010>.

⁴ <https://www.regulations.gov/comment/FRA-2025-0130-0011>.

¹⁸ 66 FR 28355 (May 22, 2001).

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET),⁵ the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD),⁶ the Transportation Division of the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers (SMART-TD),⁷ and the Brotherhood Railway Carmen Division of the Transportation Communications Union and IAM District 19 (BRC)⁸ filed comments in opposition to the proposed rule. BLET focused its opposition on (1) the proposed extension of the air flow method (AFM) indicator calibration interval from 92 days to 184 days; and (2) the proposed extension of the periodic brake system inspection period interval for electronic air brake (EAB) systems manufactured by New York Air Brake (NYAB) and Wabtec from 1,472 days to 3,680 days, based on BLET's assertion that there is insufficient data and labor input to support the safety of these interval extensions and BLET's allegation of a reduced inspection capability for the railroad industry. BLET also expressed concerns about the proposed removal of requirements to record the date of AFM indicator calibration on Form FRA F 6180-49A (the blue card), citing an alleged lack of alternate or redundant methods for air pressure measurement on trains without an end-of-train (EOT) device and the lack of self-calibration capability for AFM indicators with needle gauges.

In addition, TTD commented that the proposed rule faced an insufficient level of scrutiny from Federal transportation advisory committees, and TTD and SMART-TD objected to the advancement of the proposed rule without approval by a Federal transportation committee like the Railroad Safety Advisory Committee (RSAC). Further, SMART-TD asserted that the use of longer, heavier, and faster trains justifies more frequent maintenance and inspection, and reduced maintenance and inspection intervals, and BRC alleged that, even under current maintenance and inspection intervals, brake systems sustain a number of defects that require repair for proper functioning of the brake system.

Multiple other commenters suggested revisions to the proposed rule. The American Public Transportation

Association (APTA)⁹ and CRC contended that many locomotives have no capability to self-test the condition of an EAB system, and that the cost analysis in the NPRM failed to account for the increased cost of retrofitting these locomotives with a self-test feature. To address the issue, APTA proposed a revision that limits the applicability of the self-testing requirements to locomotives that possess a self-test feature, and CRC proposed permitting compliance through testing methods other than self-testing. CRC also requested that FRA consider an established process for more efficient review and approval of new brake system design variants without the need for a special approval or waiver. Finally, BNSF suggested revising proposed § 232.205(c)(1)(iii) to reflect language recommended by the test waiver committee¹⁰ on August 28, 2025, and NYAB suggested replacing “EE-26 (26-C emulation brake system)” with “EP-60/26 Electro-Pneumatic Brake System” in proposed § 238.309(d).

FRA appreciates support for RSAC from TTD and SMART-TD and agrees that RSAC is often a useful forum for the agency's various stakeholders to exchange information relating to the safety of rail operations. However, FRA notes that the proposed rule, including the proposed maintenance interval extensions, reflects the conditions of longstanding waivers—waivers that have been in place for approximately 15 years and have been subject to extensive scrutiny and testing. Further, test committees organized similar to RSAC working groups, comprised of labor organizations,¹¹ industry, and government representatives, performed oversight of these waivers and collected and reviewed data over a 15-year period. For example, over a 12-year period, one test committee tested six locomotives and disassembled two locomotives' air brake systems every six months and examined the brake system components for degradation and loss of functionality. Representatives of labor organizations and brake system manufacturers observed and participated in these inspections, and, as part of the test committee process, had an opportunity to object to continuation of the waivers and the extended inspection intervals based on

the results of these inspections and other data collected by each test committee. During each test committee meeting, committee members had the opportunity to discuss the results of the inspections conducted and the testing only progressed to next interval if consensus was reached among all participating test committee members.

FRA also notes that other comments presented by the labor organizations appear to overlook technological advancements and the benefits of distributed power, particularly as they apply to longer, heavier, and faster trains, and also the current, and continuing, presence of an AFM indicator calibration recording requirement for Form FRA F 6180-49A (the blue card) in § 232.205(c)(1)(iv) and the existing process addressing the introduction of new brake system technology in part 232, subpart F. The comments also provide a generic list of potential brake defects without offering any specific instances of significant brake defects discovered on equipment operated under the current, longer maintenance and inspection intervals.

With respect to comments Industry members raised about the application of self-testing requirements, the NPRM states repeatedly that the self-testing requirements of §§ 229.205 and 238.307 would apply only to equipment with EAB systems, which, in most cases, include a self-diagnostic capability. FRA is adopting this approach in the final rule but welcomes interested parties to approach FRA, on a case-by-case basis, should they have questions or concerns about application of the rule to any exceptional equipment with EAB systems that do not have self-diagnostic capability.

In response to BNSF's comments, FRA is incorporating the test waiver committee's recommended language for § 232.205(c)(1)(iii), finding that this language provides clarification, and avoids potential confusion, without impacting the intended purposes of the regulatory revision.

Finally, concerning the proposal to replace “EE-26 (26-C emulation brake system)” with “EP-60/26 Electro-Pneumatic Brake System” in proposed § 238.309(d), FRA notes that the current reference (EE-26) is broader and more inclusive, and encompasses the EP-60/26 Electro-Pneumatic Brake System. Passenger electronically controlled pneumatic (ECP) braking is an emerging technology; as future hardware is developed FRA will consider providing a list of the brake valves covered by § 238.309(d).

⁵ <https://www.regulations.gov/comment/FRA-2025-0130-0003>.

⁶ <https://www.regulations.gov/comment/FRA-2025-0130-0006>.

⁷ <https://www.regulations.gov/comment/FRA-2025-0130-0008>.

⁸ <https://www.regulations.gov/comment/FRA-2025-0130-0004>.

⁹ <https://www.regulations.gov/comment/FRA-2025-0130-0005>.

¹⁰ <https://www.regulations.gov/document/FRA-2016-0086-0044>. Conditions 2, 6, 9, and 10 outline the functions of the test committee.

¹¹ At least 15 individuals representing BLET, TTD, and other labor organizations served as members of the test committee.

II. Section-by-Section Analysis

Part 229—Locomotive Safety Standards

Section 229.5 Definitions

In this final rule, FRA is adding the abbreviation “EAB” to the existing definition of “electronic air brake” in part 229 for consistency with the adoption of this same definition in parts 232 and 238, as proposed in the NPRM. The definition is intended to be identical in each of these CFR Parts.

Section 229.29 Air Brake System Calibration, Maintenance, and Testing

With one exception, FRA has adopted the rule text as proposed in the NPRM without substantive change. The one exception is the addition of paragraph (h) to § 229.29. That paragraph, consistent with paragraphs (f) and (g), reflects a critical condition of the existing waiver, requiring the execution and passing of a self-test of all EAB systems as part of a locomotive’s periodic mechanical inspection. This new paragraph (h) is consistent with paragraph (b)(1) of § 229.29 proposed in the NPRM and adopted in this final rule and paragraph (d)(4) of § 238.307 proposed in the NPRM and adopted in this final rule. Accordingly, please refer to the discussion of this section in the NPRM’s Section-by-Section Analysis. 90 FR 28660, 28661.

Part 232—Brake System Safety Standards for Freight and Other Non-Passenger Trains and Equipment; End-of-Train Devices

Section 232.205 Class I Brake Test-Initial Terminal Inspection

The test committee for the AFM waiver (Docket No. FRA–2016–0086) met on August 28, 2025, and by consensus, voted to support the proposed rule change with a clarification that an AFM must be “verified” and a digital AFM must also have “auto calibrating functionality” to extend to 184 days between mandatory inspections.¹² The additional wording was proposed to ensure that, to receive 184-day consideration, a digital AFM must be equipped to the latest standard calibration software, as was developed through the test committee. FRA accepts the modifications proposed by the test committee in whole.

Part 238—Passenger Equipment Safety Standards

Section 238.307 Periodic Mechanical Inspection of Passenger Cars and Unpowered Vehicles Used in Passenger Trains

FRA has adopted the rule text as proposed in the NPRM without substantive change, making only conforming changes to this section’s punctuation due to the addition of new paragraph (d). Please refer to the discussion of this section in the NPRM’s Section-by-Section Analysis. 90 FR 28660, 28661–28662.

Section 238.309 Periodic Brake Equipment Maintenance

FRA has adopted the rule text as proposed in the NPRM without substantive change. Accordingly, please refer to the discussion of this section in the NPRM’s Section-by-Section Analysis. 90 FR 28660, 28662–28663.

III. Regulatory Impact and Notices

A. Executive Order 12866 (Regulatory Planning and Review) and DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures

FRA has considered the impact of this final rule under E.O. 12866 (58 FR 51735, Oct. 4, 1993), *Regulatory Planning and Review*, and DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures.¹³ The Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs within the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) determined that this final rule is not a significant regulatory action under section 3(f) of E.O. 12866.

FRA expects that this final rule will result in cost savings to the industry as it will codify longstanding waivers and save railroads the need to submit waiver petitions (and repeated requests for extensions of those waivers every five years) to FRA for continued relief of various applicable regulations. It will likewise eliminate the burden on the Federal Government to review the individual waiver petitions and extension requests. This final rule will also provide clarity to railroads regarding regulatory maintenance and inspection requirements.

¹³ 49 CFR part 5; see also DOT Order 2100.6B, Policies and Procedures for Rulemakings, available at <https://www.transportation.gov/regulations/dot-order-21006b-policies-and-procedures-rulemakings>; DOT Order 2100.7, Ensuring Reliance Upon Sound Economic Analysis in Department of Transportation Policies, Programs, and Activities, available at <https://www.transportation.gov/mission/ensuring-reliance-upon-sound-economic-analysis-department-transportation-policies-programs>.

B. Executive Order 14192 (Unleashing Prosperity Through Deregulation)

E.O. 14192, *Unleashing Prosperity Through Deregulation*, requires that for “each new [E.O. 14192 regulatory action] issued, at least ten prior regulations be identified for elimination.”¹⁴ Implementation guidance for E.O. 14192 issued by OMB (Memorandum M–25–20, Mar. 26, 2025) defines two different types of E.O. 14192 actions: an E.O. 14192 deregulatory action, and an E.O. 14192 regulatory action.¹⁵

An E.O. 14192 deregulatory action is defined as “an action that has been finalized and has total costs less than zero.” This final rule will have total costs less than zero and therefore is considered an E.O. 14192 deregulatory action.

C. Regulatory Flexibility Act

The Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*), as amended by the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996,¹⁶ requires Federal agencies to consider the effects of the regulatory action on small business and other small entities and to minimize any significant economic impact. Accordingly, DOT policy requires an analysis of the impact of all regulations on small entities, and mandates that agencies strive to lessen any adverse effects on these businesses. The term “small entities” comprises small businesses and not-for-profit organizations that are independently owned and operated and are not dominant in their fields, and governmental jurisdictions with populations of less than 50,000 (5 U.S.C. 601(6)).

In the NPRM, FRA certified that this rule would not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. No comments were received on this certification.

This final rule will not preclude small entities from continuing practices that comply with parts 229, 232, or 238; it merely offers flexibilities that will result in cost savings, if a small entity or other regulated entity chooses to utilize those flexibilities. By extending this regulatory relief, many regulated entities, including small entities, will

¹⁴ Executive Office of the President, *Executive Order 14192 of January 31, 2025, Unleashing Prosperity Through Deregulation*, 90 FR 9065–9067 (Feb. 6, 2025).

¹⁵ Executive Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget, Guidance Implementing Section 3 of Executive Order 14192, Titled “Unleashing Prosperity Through Deregulation.” Memorandum M–25–20, (Mar. 26, 2025).

¹⁶ Public Law 104–121, 110 Stat. 857 (Mar. 29, 1996).

¹² https://downloads.regulations.gov/FRA-2016-0086-0046/attachment_1.pdf.

experience benefits. FRA does not expect these impacts to be significant. Consequently, FRA holds to its previous certification that the final rule will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.

D. Paperwork Reduction Act

This final rule offers regulatory flexibilities, and it contains no new information collection requirements in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501–3520); therefore, an information collection submission to OMB is not required.

E. Environmental Assessment

FRA has analyzed this rule for the purposes of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). In accordance with 42 U.S.C. 4336 and DOT NEPA Order 5610.1D, FRA has determined that this rule is categorically excluded pursuant to 23 CFR 771.116(c)(15). This rulemaking is not anticipated to result in any environmental impacts, and there are no unusual or extraordinary circumstances present in connection with this rulemaking.

F. Federalism Implications

This final rule will not have a substantial effect on the States, on the relationship between the national government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government. Thus, in accordance with E.O. 13132, *Federalism* (64 FR 43255, Aug. 10, 1999), preparation of a Federalism Assessment is not warranted.

G. Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995

This final rule will not result in the expenditure, in the aggregate, of \$100,000,000 or more, adjusted for inflation, in any one year by State, local, or Indian Tribal Governments, or the private sector. Thus, consistent with section 202 of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104–4, 2 U.S.C. 1532), FRA is not required to prepare a written statement detailing the effect of such an expenditure.

H. Energy Impact

E.O. 13211, *Actions Concerning Regulations That Significantly Affect Energy Supply, Distribution, or Use* (66 FR 28355, May 22, 2001), requires Federal agencies to prepare a Statement of Energy Effects for any “significant energy action.”¹⁷ FRA has evaluated

this final rule in accordance with E.O. 13211 and determined that this final rule is not a “significant energy action” within the meaning of E.O. 13211.

I. Executive Order 13175 (Tribal Consultation)

FRA has evaluated this final rule in accordance with the principles and criteria contained in E.O. 13175, *Consultation and Coordination With Indian Tribal Governments* (65 FR 67249, Nov. 6, 2000). The final rule will not have a substantial direct effect on one or more Indian tribes, will not impose substantial direct compliance costs on Indian Tribal Governments, and will not preempt tribal laws. Therefore, the funding and consultation requirements of E.O. 13175 do not apply, and a tribal summary impact statement is not required.

J. International Trade Impact Assessment

The Trade Agreement Act of 1979 prohibits Federal agencies from engaging in any standards or related activities that create unnecessary obstacles to the foreign commerce of the United States. Legitimate domestic objectives, such as safety, are not considered unnecessary obstacles. The statute also requires consideration of international standards and, where appropriate, that they be the basis for U.S. standards. This final rule is purely domestic in nature and is not expected to affect trade opportunities for U.S. firms doing business overseas or for foreign firms doing business in the United States.

List of Subjects

49 CFR Part 229

Locomotives, Railroad safety, Remote control locomotives.

49 CFR Part 232

Power brakes, Railroad safety, Securement, Two-way end-of-train devices.

49 CFR Part 238

Fire prevention, Passenger equipment, Penalties, Railroad safety, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

The Final Rule

For the reasons discussed in the preamble, FRA amends parts 229, 232, and 238 of chapter II, subtitle B of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations as follows:

PART 229—RAILROAD LOCOMOTIVE SAFETY STANDARDS

■ 1. The authority citation for part 229 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 20103, 20107, 20133, 20137–38, 20143, 20168, 20701–03, 21301–02, 21304; 28 U.S.C. 2461 note; and 49 CFR 1.89.

■ 2. Amend § 229.5 by revising the definition of “Electronic air brake” to read as follows:

§ 229.5 Definitions.

* * * * *

Electronic air brake (EAB) means a brake system controlled by a computer which provides the means for control of the locomotive brakes or train brakes or both.

* * * * *

■ 3. Revise and republish § 229.29 to read as follows:

§ 229.29 Air brake system calibration, maintenance, and testing.

(a) A locomotive’s air brake system shall receive the calibration, maintenance, and testing as prescribed in this section. The level of maintenance and testing and the intervals for receiving such maintenance and testing of locomotives with various types of air brake systems shall be conducted in accordance with paragraphs (c) through (e) of this section. Records of the maintenance and testing required in this section shall be maintained in accordance with paragraph (h) of this section.

(b) Except for DMU or MU locomotives covered under § 238.309 of this chapter, the extent of air brake system maintenance and testing that is required on a locomotive shall be in accordance with the following levels:

(1) *Level one.* Locomotives shall have the filtering devices or dirt collectors located in the main reservoir supply line to the air brake system cleaned, repaired, or replaced. Locomotives equipped with EAB control valves must execute and pass a self-test of the operational health of the brake system.

(2) *Level two.* Locomotives shall have the following components cleaned, repaired, and tested: brake cylinder relay valve portions; main reservoir safety valves; brake pipe vent valve portions; and feed and reducing valve portions in the air brake system (including related dirt collectors and filters).

(3) *Level three.* Locomotives shall have the components identified in this paragraph removed from the locomotive and disassembled, cleaned and lubricated (if necessary), and tested. In addition, all parts of such components

¹⁷ 66 FR 28355 (May 22, 2001).

that can deteriorate within the inspection interval as defined in paragraphs (c) through (e) of this section shall be replaced and tested. The components include: all pneumatic components of the locomotive equipment's brake system that contain moving parts and are sealed against air leaks; all valves and valve portions; electric-pneumatic master controllers in the air brake system; and all air brake related filters and dirt collectors.

(c) Except for MU locomotives covered under § 238.309 of this chapter, all locomotives shall receive level one air brake maintenance and testing as described in this section at intervals that do not exceed 368 days.

(d) Locomotives equipped with an air brake system not specifically identified in paragraphs (e)(1) through (6) of this section shall receive level two air brake maintenance and testing as described in this section at intervals that do not exceed 368 days, and level three air brake maintenance and testing at intervals that do not exceed 736 days.

(e) Level two and level three air brake maintenance and testing shall be performed on each locomotive identified in this paragraph in accordance with the following:

(1) At intervals that do not exceed 1,104 days for locomotives equipped with PS-68, 26-C, 26-L, PS-90, CS-1, RT-2, RT-5A, GRB-1, CS-2, or 26-R brake systems (26 type brake systems) (This listing of brake system types is intended to subsume all brake systems using 26 type, 6N, MC30, ABD, or ABDW control valves and PS68, PS-90, 26B-1, 26C, 26CE, 26-B1, 30CDW, or 30ECDW engineer's brake valves.);

(2) At intervals that do not exceed 1,472 days for locomotives equipped with an air dryer and a 26 type brake system and for locomotives not equipped with an air compressor and that are semi-permanently coupled and dedicated to locomotives with an air dryer;

(3) At intervals that do not exceed 1,840 days for locomotives equipped with KB-HL1, KB-HS1, or EPIC 1 (formerly EPIC 3102) brake systems;

(4) At intervals that do not exceed 2,944 days for locomotives equipped with EPIC 3102(D2) or EPIC 2 brake systems;

(5) At intervals that do not exceed 3,128 days for locomotives equipped with CCB-1 brake systems; or

(6) At intervals that do not exceed 3,680 days for locomotives equipped with CT-1, CCB-26, or Fastbrake brake systems.

(f) All systems for the discharge or removal of moisture, such as automatic

drain valves and air dryers, must be maintained to function as intended.

(g) The air compressor (if equipped) must be maintained to function as intended with emphasis on detection and elimination of oil contamination of the main reservoir air.

(h) For locomotives equipped with an EAB system, a self-test of the operational health of the brake system must be performed and successfully passed as part of the periodic mechanical inspection.

(i) Records of the air brake system maintenance and testing required by this section shall be generated and maintained in accordance with the following:

(1) The date and place of the cleaning, repairing and testing required by this section shall be recorded on Form FRA F 6180-49A, and the work shall be certified. A record of the parts of the air brake system that are cleaned, repaired, and tested shall be kept in the railroad's files or in the cab of the locomotive.

(2) At its option, a railroad may fragment the work required by this section. In that event, a separate record shall be maintained under a transparent cover in the cab. The air record shall include: the locomotive number; a list of the air brake components; and the date and place of the inspection and testing of each component. The signature or unique employee identifier of the person performing the work and the signature or unique employee identifier of that person's supervisor shall be included for each component. A duplicate record shall be maintained in the railroad's files.

PART 232—BRAKE SYSTEM SAFETY STANDARDS FOR FREIGHT AND OTHER NON-PASSENGER TRAINS AND EQUIPMENT; END-OF-TRAIN DEVICES

■ 4. The authority citation for part 232 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 20102-20103, 20107, 20133, 20141, 20301-20303, 20306, 21301-20302, 21304; 28 U.S.C. 2461 note; and 49 CFR 1.89.

■ 5. Amend § 232.5 by adding, in alphabetical order, the definition of "Electronic air brake (EAB)" to read as follows:

§ 232.5 Definitions.

Electronic air brake (EAB) means a brake system controlled by a computer which provides the means for control of the locomotive brakes or train brakes or both.

* * * * *

■ 6. Amend § 232.205 by revising paragraph (c)(1)(iii) to read as follows:

§ 232.205 Class I brake test-initial terminal inspection.

* * * * *

(c) * * *

(1) * * *

(iii) AFM indicators must be accurate to within ± 3 standard cubic feet per minute (CFM) at 60 CFM air flow. An analog AFM indicator must be verified for accuracy at periodic intervals not to exceed 92 days. A digital AFM indicator with auto-calibrating functionality must be verified for accuracy at periodic intervals not to exceed 184 days. Any AFM indicator found out of tolerance must be calibrated. AFM indicators and all test orifices must be calibrated at temperatures of not less than 20 °F.

* * * * *

PART 238—PASSENGER EQUIPMENT SAFETY STANDARDS

■ 7. The authority citation for part 238 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 20103, 20107, 20133, 20141, 20302-20303, 20306, 20701-20702, 21301-21302, 21304; 28 U.S.C. 2461 note; and 49 CFR 1.89.

■ 8. Amend § 238.5 by adding, in alphabetical order, the definition of "Electronic air brake (EAB)" to read as follows:

§ 238.5 Definitions.

* * * * *

Electronic air brake (EAB) means a brake system controlled by a computer which provides the means for control of the locomotive brakes or train brakes or both.

* * * * *

■ 9. Amend § 238.307 by adding paragraph (d)(4) to read as follows:

§ 238.307 Periodic mechanical inspection of passenger cars and unpowered vehicles used in passenger trains.

* * * * *

(d) * * *

(4) For passenger equipment equipped with an EAB system, a self-test of the operational health of the brake system must be performed and successfully passed as part of the periodic mechanical inspection.

* * * * *

■ 10. Amend § 238.309 by:

■ a. Revising paragraphs (b), (d), and (e);

■ b. Redesignating paragraph (f) as paragraph (h);

■ c. Adding a new paragraph (f) and paragraph (g); and

■ d. Revising newly redesignated paragraph (h).

The revisions and additions read as follows:

§ 238.309 Periodic brake equipment maintenance.

* * * * *

(b) *DMU and MU locomotives.* The brake equipment and brake cylinders of each DMU or MU locomotive shall be cleaned, repaired, and tested, and the filtering devices or dirt collectors located in the main reservoir supply line to the air brake system cleaned, repaired, or replaced in accordance with the following schedule:

(1) At intervals that do not exceed 736 days if the DMU or MU locomotive is part of a fleet that is not 100 percent equipped with air dryers;

(2) At intervals that do not exceed 1,104 days if the DMU or MU locomotive is part of a fleet that is 100 percent equipped with air dryers and is equipped with a brake system not listed in paragraphs (b)(3) through (7) of this section;

(3) At intervals that do not exceed 1,472 days if the DMU or MU locomotive is part of a fleet that is 100 percent equipped with air dryers and is equipped with a PS-68, 26-C, 26-L, PS-90, CS-1, RT-2, RT-5A, GRB-1, CS-2, or 26-R brake system (26 type brake system) (This listing of brake system types is intended to subsume all brake systems using 26 type, 6N, MC30, ABD, or ABDW control valves and PS68, PS-90, 26B-1, 26C, 26CE, 26-B1, 30CDW, or 30ECDW engineer's brake valves.);

(4) At intervals that do not exceed 1,840 days if the DMU or MU locomotive is equipped with a KB-HL1, KB-HS1, or EPIC 1 (formerly EPIC 3102) brake system;

(5) At intervals that do not exceed 2,944 days if the DMU or MU locomotive is equipped with an EPIC 3102(D2) or EPIC 2 brake system;

(6) At intervals that do not exceed 3,128 days if the DMU or MU locomotive is equipped with a CCB-1 brake system; or

(7) At intervals that do not exceed 3,680 days if the DMU or MU locomotive is equipped with a CT-1, CCB-2, CCB-26, or Fastbrake brake system.

* * * * *

(d) *Passenger coaches and other unpowered vehicles.* The brake equipment on each passenger coach and each unpowered vehicle used in a passenger train shall be cleaned, repaired, and tested in accordance with following schedule:

(1) At intervals that do not exceed 1,104 days for a coach or vehicle equipped with a brake system not

specifically identified in paragraphs (d)(2) through (4) of this section;

(2) At intervals that do not exceed 1,472 days for a coach or vehicle equipped with a 26 type brake system listed in paragraph (b)(3) of this section or equivalent brake system;

(3) At intervals that do not exceed 2,208 days for a coach or vehicle equipped with an AB type brake system;

(4) At intervals that do not exceed 2,944 days for a coach or vehicle equipped with EE-26 (26-C emulation brake system) or any locomotive EAB control valve listed in paragraphs (b)(5) through (7) of this section when used for brake cylinder control only; or

(5) At intervals that do not exceed 3,680 days for a coach or vehicle equipped with EE-26 (26-C emulation brake system), or any locomotive EAB control valve listed in paragraphs (b)(5) through (7) of this section when used for brake cylinder control only and operated in a fleet where continuous brake operational health information is displayed to the train operator.

(e) *Cab cars.* The brake equipment of each cab car shall be cleaned, repaired, and tested in accordance with the following schedule:

(1) At intervals that do not exceed 736 days for all types of a cab car brake system not specifically identified in paragraphs (e)(2) through (6) of this section;

(2) At intervals that do not exceed 1,472 days for a cab car brake system equipped with 26 type brake valves listed in paragraph (b)(3) of this section;

(3) At intervals that do not exceed 1,840 days for a cab car equipped with a KB-HL1, KB-HS1, KB-CT1, or EPIC 1 (formerly EPIC 3102) brake system;

(4) At intervals that do not exceed 2,944 days for a cab car equipped with an EPIC 3102(D2) or EPIC 2 brake system;

(5) At intervals that do not exceed 3,128 days for a cab car equipped with a CCB-1 brake system; or

(6) At intervals that do not exceed 3,680 days for a cab car equipped with a CT-1, CCB-2, CCB-26, or Fastbrake brake system.

(f) *Moisture discharge or removal system maintenance.* Automatic drain valve and air dryer maintenance. All systems for the discharge or removal of moisture, such as automatic drain valves and air dryers, must be maintained to function as intended.

(g) *Air compressor maintenance.* The air compressor (if equipped) must be maintained to function as intended with emphasis on detection and elimination of oil contamination of the main reservoir air.

(h) *Records of periodic maintenance.*

(1) The date and place of the cleaning, repairing, and testing required by this section shall be recorded on Form FRA 6180-49A or a similar form developed by the railroad containing the same information, and the person performing the work and that person's supervisor shall sign or mark the form with a unique employee identifier, if possible. Alternatively, the railroad may stencil the vehicle with the date and place of the cleaning, repairing, and testing and maintain an electronic record of the person performing the work and that person's supervisor.

(2) A record of the parts of the air brake system that are cleaned, repaired, and tested shall be kept in the railroad's files, the cab of the locomotive, or a designated location in the passenger car until the next such periodic test is performed.

Issued in Washington, DC, under authority delegated in 49 CFR 1.89.

David A. Fink,
Administrator.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

49 CFR Part 232

[Docket No. FRA-2025-0127]

RIN 2130-AD51

Permitting Use of Computer-Based, Three-Dimensional Simulation for Periodic Refresher Training on Brake Systems

AGENCY: Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This rule permits railroads to use a simulation that is instructor-led, computer-based, and three-dimensional (3D) to satisfy the hands-on portion of periodic refresher training under FRA's brake system training requirements, consistent with waivers FRA has granted to date. This computer-based 3D simulation training can provide employees with randomized scenarios that may not be readily available for hands-on training and facilitate real-time feedback on performance of duties.

DATES: This rule is effective September 30, 2026.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Check Kam, Mechanical Engineer, Office of Railroad Safety, FRA, telephone: (202) 366-2139, email: