



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

**Federal Railroad  
Administration**

# Memorandum

Date: June 15, 1998

Reply to Att. of: MP&E 98-25

Subject: Burro Crane Requirements

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

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

The following interpretations of the Federal regulations regarding the operation of burro cranes should be used for consistent compliance and enforcement guidelines:

1. Chapter 203SSafety Appliances, §20302. General requirements (a)(4), which requires power driving-wheel brakes on locomotives, applies to a Burro Crane being used to pull or push cars on tracks that are part of the general rail system.
2. Railroad Power Brakes and Drawbars, 49CFR Part 232, states that power brakes are not required to be installed on "locomotive cranes" built prior to September 21, 1945. By implication, power brakes are required on all locomotive cranes, including Burro Cranes, built on or after September 21, 1945.
3. Chapter 203SSafety Appliances, §20302. General requirements (a)(1)(A) which requires automatic couplers; (a)(1)(B) secure sill steps and hand brakes; and (a)(2) grab irons or handholds; all of which apply to a Burro Crane.
4. If the Burro Crane is used as a road locomotive, §231.29 of the Safety Appliance Standards, a road locomotive with corner stairways apply.
5. If the Burro Crane is used as a locomotive in switching operations as defined in §231.30(b)(2), the requirements of §231.30 of the Safety Appliance Standards apply.
6. Other sections of the Safety Appliance Standards do not appear to apply.
7. Despite the fact that the Burro Crane is excluded from the definition of "locomotive" under §229.5(l) of the Locomotive Safety Standards as a piece of specialized maintenance equipment and is not subject to those Standards, the Burro Crane is

nevertheless subject to the statutory requirements of the Locomotive Inspection Act, in particular, the requirement that it be safe. In the preamble to the final locomotive rules, FRA explicitly recognizes the applicability of the Act by stating that “FRA will continue to implement the basic statutory safety requirements with respect to such work equipment by using the Special Notice For Repair when appropriate.” 45 FR 21093.

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