



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

**Federal Railroad  
Administration**

# Memorandum

Date: January 7, 2000

Reply to Att. of: MP&E 00-02

Subject: Part 232, Inspection Activity Codes

From: Edward R. English  
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To: Regional Administrators, Deputy Regional Administrators,  
Motive Power & Equipment Specialists and Inspectors

Recently, questions have been raised concerning the current method of compiling air brake inspection data. Specifically, the data does not distinguish whether cars are "on-air" or "off-air" when inspections for air brake compliance, Part 232, are performed. For the purposes of this discussion, "on-air" means the car has sufficient brake pipe pressure to operate the air brake pistons, and the car is inspected with the brakes applied. This could be either a full service or an emergency brake application. "Off-air" means the car is inspected without the brakes applied.

Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) inspectors routinely examine cars that are not "on-air" to inspect for the securement of the brake equipment, the position of the retainers, condition of the brake pipe and valves, the operation of angle cocks, etc. Such inspections are included in the car count under the activity code for Part 232. However, many functions of the brakes can not be observed; *i.e.* piston travel limits, binding or fouling, audible air leaks, etc.

In order to determine whether cars inspected for Part 232 compliance are "on-air" or "off-air", a new activity code has been created. Effective immediately, inspectors shall use the following activity codes for Part 232 inspection activities:

<u>Activity Code</u>	<u>Inspection Activity</u>
232	Any car inspected for Part 232 compliance that does not have the brakes applied.
232A	Any car inspected for Part 232 compliance that has the brakes applied by either a service reduction or an emergency application, so that the functionality of the brakes and piston

travel limits can be observed.

232T Anytime a train air brake test is observed.

232E An inspection of the End-of-Train Device is conducted.

232S Monitoring a single car or repair track air brake test.

Inspectors are also reminded that they need to verify the number of cars inspected before entering the number on the inspection report. Do not rely solely upon the representation of railroad personnel or train consist sheets to determine how many cars are inspected. There are several methods inspectors could use, including counting the cars with hand-held counters, or using the train consist and checking off the cars as they are inspected.

If there are any questions, contact your Regional Specialist.

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