

HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT PARKING BRAKES?

Have you ever had to make out a "Delay and Defect Report" on cars that were "drifters"? Ever wonder why cars become "drifters"?

It's not because the Shop Department is lax. The regular servicing schedule calls for brake shoe replacement well before normal wear could cause a car to become a "drifter." A normal application of parking brakes means application for the final stop after dynamic braking slows the train to about 1 MPH. With this type of use brake shoes last for thousands of stops.

Why, then, do we have "drifters"? The answer is abnormal wear caused by applications of parking brakes at speeds higher than 1 MPH.

Parking brakes apply at higher speeds either as a supplement to dynamic braking or in place of dynamic braking if it should fail. However, they're not designed for use at higher speeds and with this type of use they wear out after a relatively few stops.

What causes parking brakes to apply at speeds over 1 MPH? Here are the main reasons:

1. placing the Cineston handle in fourth point of brake (emergency).
2. letting the Cineston handle rise while moving (on Series 6000 cars only).
3. sliding wheels while in a brake position (this causes a loss of dynamic braking and an immediate application of parking brakes).
4. motor failure (this also causes a loss of dynamic).

There is never an excuse for allowing a Cineston handle to rise while moving, but there are, of course, occasions when safety requires an emergency (4th pt.) stop and there are also occasions when motor failure occurs or an unexpected slippery rail causes a slide. However, careful operation, constant alertness and proper braking minimize the need for emergency stops and minimize the possibility of slides. Proper trouble shooting will protect parking brakes in the event of motor failure.

(OVER)

Next time you think about letting up the handle to stop short and "spot" passengers or next time a careless approach or improper braking causes you to use fourth point to keep all the doors in the station, remember the wear on those parking brakes. You may need them badly on your very next stop.

Remember, worn out parking brakes won't be of much use to you or to the next Motorman who operates the equipment you've abused.