

45. Standard for Signal Equipment Room Ground Inspection and Testing

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Abstract: This standard provides procedures for inspecting and testing rail transit signal equipment room grounding.

Keywords: ground, inspection, signal equipment room, test, testing

Introduction

(This introduction is not a part of APTA RT-SC-S-045-03, *Standard for Signal Equipment Room Ground Inspection and Testing*.)

APTA rail transit safety standards represent an industry consensus on safety practices for rail transit systems to help achieve a high level of safety for passengers, employees, and the general public. This document was created by and for those parties concerned with its provisions; namely, rail transit systems (operating agencies), manufacturers, consultants, engineers, and general interest groups. This standard provides procedures for inspecting and testing rail transit signal equipment room grounding.

APTA recommends this standard for:

- Individuals or organizations that inspect, maintain, and/or operate rail transit systems
- Individuals or organizations that contract with others for the inspection, maintenance, and/or operation of rail transit systems
- Individuals or organizations that influence how rail transit systems are inspected, maintained, and/or operated (including but not limited to consultants, designers, and contractors)

This standard intends to meet the following objectives:

- To ensure special life/safety equipment is operational and reliable
- To help rail transit systems incorporate safety considerations during the inspection and maintenance process
- To identify inspection criteria and maintenance standards that provide a high level of passenger and personnel safety

The application of any standards, practices, or guidelines contained herein is voluntary. In some cases, federal and/or state regulations govern portions of how a rail transit system operates. In such cases, the government regulations override any conflicting practices this document requires or recommends.

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Standard for Signal Equipment Room Ground Inspection and Testing

1. Overview

1.1 Scope

This document establishes standard requirements for inspecting and testing rail transit signal equipment room ground systems.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this standard is to verify that signal equipment room ground systems and equipment are operating safely and as designed through periodic inspection and testing, thereby increasing reliability and reducing the risk of hazards and failures. Proper grounding is critical for personnel safety, equipment protection, and noise control in signal systems.

1.3 Alternate practices

Individual rail transit systems may modify the practices in this standard to accommodate their specific equipment and mode of operation. APTA recognizes that some rail transit systems may have unique operating environments that make strict compliance with every provision of this standard impossible. As a result, certain rail transit systems may need to implement the standards and practices herein in ways that are more or less restrictive than this document prescribes. A rail transit system (RTS) may develop alternates to the APTA standards so long as the alternates are based on a safe operating history and are described and documented in the system's safety program plan (or another document that is referenced in the system safety program plan).

Documentation of alternate practices shall:

- a) Identify the specific APTA rail transit safety standard requirements that cannot be met
- b) State why each of these requirements cannot be met
- c) Describe the alternate methods used
- d) Describe and substantiate how the alternate methods do not compromise safety and provide a level of safety equivalent to the practices in the APTA safety standard (operating histories or hazard analysis findings may be used to substantiate this claim).

2. Definitions and acronyms

For the purposes of this standard, the following definitions and acronyms apply:

2.1 Definitions

2.1.1 ground bus: An interconnecting point in a signal equipment room at earth ground potential.

2.1.2 ground: A low resistance connection to earth potential.

2.1.3 hazard: Any real or potential condition that can cause injury, death, or damage or loss of equipment or property.

2.1.4 operations control center (OCC): That facility from which train control, train dispatching, and/or train supervision takes place for the entire RTS or for specific segments of a system if there is more than one control center. *Syn:* **rail control center, rail operations center, rail service control center, train command center.**

2.1.5 original equipment manufacturer (OEM): The enterprise that initially designs and builds a piece of equipment.

2.1.6 personal protective equipment (PPE): All clothing and other work accessories designed to create a barrier against workplace hazards. Examples include safety goggles, blast shields, hard hats, hearing protectors, gloves, respirators, aprons, and work boots.

2.1.7 rail transit system (RTS): The organization or portion of an organization that operates rail transit service and related activities. *Syn:* **operating agency, operating authority, transit agency, transit authority, transit system.**

2.1.8 signal equipment room: A train control room, relay room, bungalow, or hut located in a passenger station or yard or at some other strategic point to house signal equipment.

2.2 Acronyms

OCC	operations control center
OEM	original equipment manufacturer
PPE	personal protective equipment
RTS	rail transit system

3. Inspection and testing requirements

3.1 Inspection and testing frequency

The inspection and testing procedures in this standard shall be performed when signal equipment room grounds are placed in service, when grounds are modified, repaired, or disarranged, or as otherwise deemed necessary by the RTS.

The RTS shall determine the need for additional inspection and testing frequencies for signal equipment room ground systems. A review of the following factors may be useful in making this assessment:

- OEM-recommended intervals
- Industry experience
- Operating environment/conditions
- Historical data
- Reliability-centered maintenance program development
- Failure analysis
- RTS testing and experience
- Regulatory requirements

The frequency of tasks shall comply with applicable federal, state, and local regulations.

3.2 Training

The RTS and/or their maintenance contractors shall develop and execute training programs that provide employees with the knowledge and skills necessary to safely and effectively perform the tasks outlined in this standard.

3.3 Materials

No consumable materials are required for inspecting and testing signal equipment room ground systems unless otherwise specified by the OEM and/or RTS.

3.4 Tools

The following tools are required for inspecting and testing signal equipment room ground systems:

- Ground resistance measuring device*
- RTS-approved portable radio
- Standard tools carried by maintenance personnel
- Additional tools as required by the OEM and/or RTS

* Calibrate in accordance with OEM and/or RTS requirements.

3.5 Personal protective equipment

Personal protective equipment, as required by the RTS, shall be worn at all times during inspection and testing.

3.6 Safety

RTS safety rules, procedures, and practices shall be followed at all times during inspection and testing.

3.7 Inspection and testing procedure

Signal equipment room ground inspection and testing procedures may be modified for each rail transit system's requirements (see Section 1.3) but shall contain the steps listed in Sections 3.7.1-3.7.4 as a minimum.

- 3.7.1** Notify the operations control center (OCC) and/or other authorities of the inspection and testing activities to be performed.
- 3.7.2** Inspect the integrity of the ground bus, conductors, and connections and ensure connections are secure and free of corrosion and excessive heat.
- 3.7.3** Measure the resistance from the ground bus to earth ground potential. The resistance should be no more than 15 ohms.
- 3.7.4** If no further work is to be performed, notify the OCC and/or other authorities that the inspection and test activities are complete.

3.8 Correction of deficiencies

Deficiencies identified during signal equipment room ground equipment inspection and testing shall be corrected and documented in accordance with OEM and/or RTS requirements.

3.9 Documentation

Inspection and testing shall be documented, reviewed, and filed in accordance with RTS procedures.

Annex A

(informative)

Bibliography

- [B1] C&S 1, Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority, Standard Instructions Governing Construction and Maintenance of Wayside Signal Systems, Revision 1: 5/16/01.
- [B2] Original equipment manufacturer (OEM) specifications for signal equipment room ground inspection and testing.
- [B3] Rail transit system (RTS) procedures for signal equipment room ground inspection and testing.