



APTA STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

STANDARD

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PRESS Inspection & Maintenance
Working Group

Pantograph Current Collection Equipment Periodic Inspection and Maintenance

Abstract: This standard covers basic procedures for periodic inspection and maintenance of pantograph current collection equipment on locomotives and multiple unit (MU) cars, with emphasis on maintenance of high-voltage current collection devices.

Keywords: current collection equipment, maintenance, pantograph, periodic inspection

Summary: This document establishes a standard for pantograph current collection equipment periodic inspection and maintenance. Individual railroads should tailor these standards to accommodate their specific equipment and mode of operation.

Scope and purpose: This standard includes all essential periodic inspection and maintenance requirements for pantograph current collection equipment used on locomotives/multiple unit (MU) cars. It is intended for use by rail equipment maintenance organizations. It establishes procedures for periodic inspection and maintenance of pantograph current collection equipment used on locomotives/MU cars.

This document represents a common viewpoint of those parties concerned with its provisions, namely operating/planning agencies, manufacturers, consultants, engineers and general interest groups. The application of any standards, recommended practices or guidelines contained herein is voluntary. In some cases, federal and/or state regulations govern portions of a transit system's operations. In those cases, the government regulations take precedence over this standard. The North American Transit Service Association and its parent organization APTA recognize that for certain applications, the standards or practices, as implemented by individual agencies, may be either more or less restrictive than those given in this document.

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Participants

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Introduction

This introduction is not part of APTA PR-IM-S-016-02, Rev. 2, "Pantograph Current Collection Equipment Periodic Inspection and Maintenance."

This standard describes the basic periodic inspection and maintenance requirements for pantograph current collection equipment on locomotives/multiple unit (MU) cars. APTA recommends the use of this standard by:

- individuals or organizations that maintain pantograph current collection equipment on locomotives/MU cars;
- individuals or organizations that contract with others for the maintenance of pantograph current collection equipment on locomotives/MU cars; and
- individuals or organizations that influence how pantograph current collection equipment is maintained on locomotives/MU cars.

This standard is intended to satisfy the following objectives:

- Identify those inspection criteria and maintenance standards that provide a high level of passenger safety.
- Incorporate safety considerations during the periodic inspection and maintenance process. Identify those inspection criteria and maintenance standards that provide a high level of workplace safety.

Pantograph Current Collection Equipment Periodic Inspection and Maintenance

1. Frequency of conduct

Maintenance tasks on the pantograph current collection equipment should be performed on a regular schedule to ensure proper operation of the equipment. The schedule shown in **Table 1** is time based; however, the rail agency may determine to use a mileage interval based on its operating experience. The sections listed in **Table 1** provide a guide of detailed procedures for each identified maintenance task.

TABLE 1
 Inspection Intervals

Inspections and Maintenance	Recommended Periodic Inspection Intervals	Referenced Section of This Document (Unless Otherwise Noted)
Daily pantograph inspection	Daily	CFR Part 229.45
Carbon strips	Not to exceed 92 days	2.5 (a)
Head/horns	Not to exceed 92 days	2.5 (b)
Raising and lowering	Not to exceed 92 days	2.5 (c)
Bearings	Not to exceed 92 days	2.5 (d)
Chain/cable and cam	Not to exceed 92 days	2.5 (e)
Contact force	Not to exceed 92 days	2.5 (f)
Shunts	Not to exceed 92 days	2.5 (g)
Shunt connections	Not to exceed 92 days	2.5 (h)
Insulators	Not to exceed 92 days	2.5 (i)
Fuse/circuit breaker	Not to exceed 92 days	2.5 (j)
Safety signage	Not to exceed 92 days	2.5 (k)
Pantograph poles	Not to exceed 92 days	2.5 (l)
Latch-down mechanisms	Not to exceed 92 days	2.5 (m)
Auxiliary pumping systems	Not to exceed 92 days	2.5 (n)
Fiber-optic systems	Not to exceed 92 days	2.5 (o)
Lightning arrester	Not to exceed 92 days	2.5 (p)
Roof cables	Not to exceed 92 days	2.5 (q)
Operating cylinders, springs, hoses and air foils (if equipped)	Not to exceed 92 days	2.5 (r)
Insulation test	1 year, not to exceed 3 years	2.5 (s)
Pantograph change-out	1 year, not to exceed 5 years	2.5 (t)

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The frequency of tasks in **Table 1** shall comply with all applicable federal, state and local regulations. As part of a railroad's periodic inspection and maintenance program, frequencies for individual tasks may be established based on a number of additional factors, including but not limited to the following:

- original equipment manufacturer (OEM)—recommended intervals
- industry experience
- operating environment/conditions
- historical data
- performance requirements
- failure analysis
- railroad's testing and experience
- reliability-centered maintenance programs
- railroad standard maintenance procedure (SMP)

2. Requirements and specific tasks

CAUTION: The following inspection and maintenance procedures must be carried out under overhead wire that is voltage free or in an area where no overhead wire is present. Follow proper lock-out/tag-out and blue flag protection of workers procedures as required by the railroad and in accordance with federal regulations.

CAUTION: During the lowering and raising operation, all personnel must remain clear of the pantograph to avoid being struck by the mechanism.

CAUTION: Ensure that the vehicle is secured against uncontrolled movement in accordance with local railroad rules before commencing inspection and maintenance procedures.

CAUTION: When detaching equipment from the pantograph assembly, ensure that all components are adequately supported to prevent uncontrolled movement.

2.1 Materials

- approved non-conducting cleaning chemical
- approved lubricants
- additional materials as required by the OEM and railroad standard maintenance procedure (SMP)

2.2 Tools

- force gauge (spring scale or digital) or weight
- 1000 VDC megohmmeter (commonly referred to as a megger)*
- multimeter*
- stopwatch*
- standard tools carried by maintenance personnel

NOTE: An asterisk (*) denotes tools that shall be calibrated in accordance with OEM and railroad procedures.

2.3 Safety/personal protective equipment

Personal protective equipment, as required by the railroad, shall be worn at all times in the performance of these inspection and maintenance tasks.

2.4 Training requirements

Railroads and/or their maintenance contractors shall develop and execute training programs consistent with the requirements of 49 CFR, Section 238.109 (see References) that provide employees with the knowledge and the skills necessary to safely and effectively perform the tasks outlined in this standard.

2.5 Inspection and maintenance procedures

- a) Visually inspect the carbon strips for thickness and condition. Replace the carbon strips if the remaining material is less than manufacturer's recommendations or railroad's practice. Carbon strips shall be replaced if cracks are detected.

NOTE: Carbon strips can be replaced as a complete set, or grooving or chipping may be corrected by matching or grinding, providing that proper safety precautions are taken.

NOTE: Carbon strips can wear and deteriorate at an accelerated rate, particularly during freezing conditions. It is recommended that all carbon strips be inspected immediately following the completion of each run during such conditions.

- b) Check pantograph head for freedom of movement (rotation and/or vertical movement in relationship to pantograph arm). Check pantograph horns for damage or wear. Check leaf springs for cracks or damage.
- c) Visually inspect the pantograph during raising and lowering for freedom of operation. Record the time required for movement in both directions. If required times are not met, then make necessary adjustments per OEM recommendations and railroad SMP. In addition, check the manual raise and lower mechanism and lockdown mechanism. Make sure a manual raise handle is on board the vehicle if so equipped.
- d) Inspect the bearings for freedom of movement and excessive play. Replace as required. Clean the exterior of the bearing assembly and lubricate with approved lubricants.
- e) Visually inspect the chain/cable and cams for wear and freedom of movement. Replace as required. Lubricate the chain/cable with the approved lubricant.
- f) Measure the contact force, using a force gauge or weights, ascending and descending through the specified operating range. Compare the average of the two readings to that specified by the railroad. If necessary, make required adjustments to obtain the desired contact force.
- g) Visually inspect all shunts for frayed, broken, cut, burnt or otherwise defective conditions. If any of these conditions exist, then replace the shunt. When replacing shunts, make sure the contact surfaces are clean and free from dirt or corrosion.

NOTE: If required by railroad or OEM recommendations, use colloidal copper coating material between connections.

NOTE: Ensure that the shunts do not rub against each other or a frame member. Adjust shunts as required to provide clearance.

- h) Visually inspect all shunts for loose connections, and tighten as required.
- i) Clean insulators with an approved non-conductive grease-dissolving solvent. Visually inspect for damage, and replace if required.
- j) Visually inspect ribbon/cartridge fuse and/or circuit breakers for deterioration and burning, if so equipped. Functional testing of all grounding switches, current transformers, vacuum breakers, etc. should be done at this time, using the safety precautions already established. Using a multimeter, check the continuity of the fuses. Replace if required.
- k) Visually inspect all safety-related signage. Replace/clean if missing/obscured.

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- l) Pantograph poles should be checked for cracks and delamination. Check for broken end horns or other damage.
- m) Inspect and test latch-down mechanisms for effective locking devices. Check the manual locking hook and grounding blade for correct operation. Clean and lubricate the grounding blade in accordance with OEM instructions and railroad SMP.
- n) Check auxiliary pumping devices (if applicable) for ease of operation. Inspect for leaks.
- o) If so equipped, clean and service fiber-optic system in accordance with OEM instructions and railroad SMP.
- p) Visually inspect the lightning arrester for cracks, damage or oil leakage. Clean with an approved non-conductive grease-dissolving solvent. Replace if required.
- q) Visually inspect all roof-mount cables for condition and tightness of connections. Make certain that cables are not lying over objects that will cause them to chafe.
- r) Inspect condition of all operating cylinders, springs, hoses and air foils (if so equipped). Replace as necessary.
- s) Perform an insulation test using a megger set at 1000 VDC. Ensure that the knife switch or main breaker is in the open position. Connect the megger negative lead to carbody ground and the positive lead to the line side of the main knife switch or circuit breaker. An insulation level sufficient to ensure freedom from tracking, arcing, fire and other electrical hazards shall be achieved and maintained. Equipment shall meet a minimum level of 5 megohms.
- t) Follow OEM recommendations and railroad SMP for pantograph change out. Check roof insulators for cracks and chips. Replace as necessary. Clean with approved cleaning agent.
- u) Check and verify the minimum and maximum height and adjust in accordance with OEM instructions and railroad SMP.
- v) Check for air leaks on automatic drop systems in accordance with OEM instructions and railroad SMP.

Related APTA standards

APTA PR-E-RP-004-98, “Gap and Creepage Distance”

APTA PR-E-RP-009-98, “Wire used on Passenger Equipment”

APTA PR-IM-S-014-99, “Modification Methodology for the Periodic Inspection and Maintenance of Passenger Coaches” (previously numbered as APTA SS-I&M-014-99)

References

Code of Federal Regulations:

49 CFR, Part 229, “Railroad Locomotive Safety Standards,”

49 CFR, Part 238, “Passenger Equipment Safety Standards,”

This standard also shall be used in conjunction with the following publications (when the following standards are superseded by an approved revision, the revision shall apply):

- OEM specifications for pantograph current collection equipment inspection and maintenance
- local operating property procedures for pantograph current collection equipment inspection and maintenance
- railroad procedures for providing blue flag protection of workers

Definitions

carbon strip: The current-collector strip mounted to the top of the pantograph, which slides along the contact wire.

calendar day inspection: An inspection performed each calendar day as prescribed by 49 CFR, Parts 229 and 238.

periodic maintenance: The performance of selected inspection and maintenance actions on systems or subsystems. The frequency of these actions may be set by regulatory agencies or by the railroad. The frequency may be expressed as a function of time (i.e., days, weeks or months) or in mileage or cycles.

pantograph: On a locomotive or MU car, the device that connects to the voltage supply through the catenary or contact wire to supply the power for propulsion and auxiliary systems, typically consisting of a linked framework, mounted on top of a rail vehicle.

Abbreviations and acronyms

APTA	American Public Transportation Association
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
MU	multiple unit
NATSA	North American Transportation Services Association
OEM	original equipment manufacturer
PRESS	Passenger Rail Equipment Safety Standards
SMP	standard maintenance procedure
VDC	voltage direct current

Summary of document changes

- Document formatted to the new APTA standard format.
- Sections have been moved and renumbered.
- Scope and summary moved to the front page.

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- Definitions and Abbreviations and Acronyms moved to the rear of the document.
- Two new sections added: “Summary of document changes” and “Document history.”
- Some global changes to section headings and numberings resulted when sections dealing with references and acronyms were moved to the end of the document, along with other cosmetic changes, such as capitalization, punctuation, spelling, grammar and general flow of text.
- Addition of a weight to Section 2.2.
- Addition of a leaf spring check to Section 2.5 b).
- Addition of manual locking hook and grounding blade steps to Section 2.5 m).
- Addition of SMP to Sections 2.5 o) and t).
- Addition of pantograph heights to Section 2.5 u).
- Addition of a leak check to Section 2.5 v).
- **Table 1** last entry for pantograph change-out amended from “1 year, not to exceed 3 years” to “1 year, not to exceed 5 years.” The change was made to accommodate some properties where testing and experience, along with their maintenance procedures, are able to use the pantographs for up to five years.
- References updated to reflect current (as of May 1st, 2017) information.
- Addition of APTA and PRESS to “Abbreviations and acronyms.”
- Participants list updated.

Document history

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