



**Title:** **Moving Railborne Track Maintenance Equipment**

**Issued to:** Transportation Manager, Rail Supervisor, Rail Instructor, Yardmaster, Tower Workers, Switch Workers, Rapid Transit Operators, Rail Controllers, Power Controllers

**Approved by:**

  
Chief Transit Officer

**Supersedes:** Moving Railborne Track Maintenance Equipment, 8137 (06-18-23)

## INTRODUCTION

All track maintenance equipment operated on in-service track **must** be protected by manual block operation.

Certain automatic functions throughout the rail system rely on track occupancy indications from railborne equipment that shunts track circuits (gives an indication that the track is occupied). Equipment that does not shunt track circuits will not activate these automatic functions. For example, when equipment that does not shunt the track circuit approaches an automatic interlocking, there is a risk of a derailment because a switch may move under equipment as it moves through an interlocking. When equipment that does not shunt the track circuit approaches an automatically lowering street crossing gate, the street crossing gate will not lower, creating a risk of collision.

Many pieces of track maintenance equipment have a short wheelbase and will not consistently shunt track circuits. Examples of equipment that does not shunt or shunt inconsistently include, but are not limited to: tampers, cranes, tie handlers, snow brooms, geometry testing equipment and non-CTA vehicles. See page 5 for a list of CTA equipment that does not shunt.

Routes at automatic interlockings that are normally established as trains approach and street crossing gates that lower automatically should **NOT** be expected to function for these vehicles.

When **any** track equipment (including equipment that shunts) is moved, the following procedures **must** be followed.

## PLANNED TRACK MAINTENANCE EQUIPMENT MOVES

A Rail Service Bulletin must be published for scheduled movement of track maintenance equipment. The bulletin must include:

- Number of pieces of equipment being moved.
- Equipment ID numbers for all equipment being moved.
- Starting point and destination.
- The track numbers where the track maintenance equipment will be laid up.
- ID numbers of the equipment to be stored on the track(s).

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- Personnel scheduled to be aboard the equipment.

Whenever the track maintenance equipment will be laid up in a yard or on a middle, center or side track, a Rail Service Bulletin with an associated Power & Way Bulletin will be published to take the track out of service and remove power.

**GENERAL OPERATION PROCEDURES**

- A Yardmaster, Rail Instructor, Rail Supervisor or Rail Transportation Manager (henceforth referred to as the *employee in charge*) must supervise the movement of any track equipment.
- The *employee in charge* must:
  - Authorize equipment to move through any yard, interlocking, grade crossing, turnout or crossover. Tower assistance is required for interlockings.
  - Contact the Controller before departing from the initial location for authorization to take the equipment onto a main line. If the move was scheduled, mention the relevant Rail Service Bulletin.
    - Describe the complete route, number of pieces of equipment to be moved, equipment identification numbers and personnel aboard the equipment.
    - Receive authorization from Control Center Operations before entering any mainline track. When requesting authorization, the employee in charge must indicate how many pieces of equipment are being moved and their destination. Control Center Operations will document the equipment on the Rail Control Record.
  - Notify the Controller whenever the equipment changes routes, passes through major junction points and is clear of the main line at its destination.
  - Before making the move, explain the required move in detail to the Tower Worker/control panel operator and explain the problems that may be encountered when moving the track maintenance equipment through the interlocking.
  - Remind all personnel involved that track equipment may only indicate occupancy intermittently on the tower panel as the equipment proceeds through track circuits.
  - Ride the piece of track equipment except in yard limits or on out of service track.
  - When moving multiple pieces of track equipment, the *employee in charge* will ride the first piece of equipment, and an employee with a Rapid Transit Operator (RTO) qualification will ride the last piece of equipment.
    - The RTO-qualified employee is responsible for unpinning all trips, removing all wedges from all switch points and notifying the employee in charge and Rail Controller when all trips are unpinning and all wedges removed.
  - The Roadmaster is responsible for ensuring a safe following distance is enforced.
  - At track level, with the assigned Infrastructure Engineer, walk with and observe any high rail rubber-tired vehicles within yard limits to ensure that switches are properly lined and thrown.

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- The operator of the track equipment *must be qualified* to operate that specific piece of equipment.
- Any trip that fails to lower must be pinned to prevent damage to the track equipment.
- All pinned trips must be unpinned when the move is completed.
- When operating on an **in-service** track, **all** track maintenance equipment, including equipment that shunts, must be protected by manual block operation. See Standard Operating Procedure 8198, *Manual Block Operation*.
- A Senior Manager or above may require a supervisory employee equipped with a two-way radio; to ride the first train operating behind the track equipment (buffer train).
  - Examples of when a buffer train may be required include moves over in-service track that cross multiple lines (for example, from Rosemont on the Blue Line to 54th on the Pink Line).
  - The buffer train must be a non-revenue extra train.
  - Whenever non-shunting equipment or equipment being coached in the trailing position is operated during revenue service hours, a non-revenue extra train will be assigned to be used as a buffer.
  - When operating on a line during non-revenue service hours when no other trains are operating at the time of the transfer, a buffer train may not be required unless ordered by a senior manager or above.
- ***Track maintenance equipment must never trail through any switch, including a spring and stay switch, that is not properly lined as it may not cause the switch to be thrown.***
- The Roadmaster in charge of the track equipment is responsible for ensuring that a spring frog is properly lined before operating equipment over the frog.

**OPERATION THROUGH INTERLOCKINGS**

**Track maintenance equipment may only indicate occupancy intermittently on a tower panel as the vehicle proceeds through track circuits. Therefore, at automatic interlockings that are activated by approaching trains, a route request could occur and activate while a piece of track maintenance equipment is moving through the interlocking.** Employees must ensure that switches do not operate while movements of track maintenance equipment are in progress.

- If no Tower Worker or control panel operator is on duty, the *employee in charge* (or their designee) must assume the role of the Tower Worker.
- With a Tower Worker on duty, or when using a power operated crossover trackside control panel,
  - The *employee in charge* (or their designee) shall:
    - Inform the Tower Worker/control panel operator and Rail Controller when all track maintenance vehicles have cleared the interlocking or power operated crossovers.
  - The Tower Worker/control panel operator shall:

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- Line the route by using auxiliary switch or unit levers to preset and lock all switches.
- Clear all necessary interlocking home signals.
- After establishing the route, physically move away from the tower or trackside control panel a sufficient distance to prevent accidental operation of the auxiliary switch or unit levers.
- Notify the *employee in charge* that the route is established and locked in.
- Where no control panel is available or when a wayside route selector is used,
  - All switch points (both facing and trailing) must be properly lined and wedged.
  - All raised trips must be lowered and pinned.
  - Immediately when the move is completed, the *employee in charge* must:
    - Ensure all wedges are removed.
    - Ensure all pinned trips are unpinned.
    - Ensure that all switches are locked.
    - Ensure that local control panels (if applicable) are set to automatic.
    - Ensure that any trouble alarms are reset.
    - Notify the Controller when the trips are unpinned.

**OPERATION AT GRADE CROSSINGS**

- Street crossing gates must be operated manually, even if they open and lower automatically. Signal Maintainers may raise and lower the street crossing gates.
- A Signal Maintainer must be at track level to give a signal to proceed through grade crossings once it is safe to do so and the gates are lowered.
- Once the automatic gate crossing signal light is illuminated steady green, indicating that the gates are lowered, the *employee in charge* will authorize equipment to move through the grade crossing, if it is safe to do so.
- When the move is completed, an employee with RTO qualifications (Switch Worker, Supervisor, Manager, Instructor, Flagger) may restore street crossing gates to automatic operation.
- The Signal Maintainer will notify the Controller when the gates are restored to operation.

**Title: Moving Railborne Track Maintenance Equipment****CTA NON-SHUNTING RAILBORNE TRACK MAINTENANCE EQUIPMENT**

As of this SOP publication effective date, the following CTA equipment does not shunt or shunts inconsistently:

- Ballast Regulator (S-707) and Ballast Regulator “KNOX” (S-721, S-722)
- Chase Tamper (S-719, S-720)
- Command Centers (S-661, S662, S-663, S-664, S-665)
- Double Broom Regulator (S-709)
- Regulator Snow Fighter (S-751, S752, S-753, S-754, S-755)
- Scarfire (S-724)
- Spike Puller “Nordco” (S-731)
- Spiker (S-730)
- Tamper Mark VI (S-700, S-704)
- Tie Crane “KERSHAW” (S-717, S-718, S-726, S-727)
- Tie Crane John Deere 135 G (S-733) and Tie Crane John Deere 85G (S-732)
- Tie Inserter (S-713, S-715, S-723, S-725)
- Track Conveyor (S-716)
- Track Stabilizer (S-701, S-705)
- Under Cutter (S-714)

**SAFETY IS PART OF THE JOB**

Follow all CTA established rules relating to safe operation, as well as those rules relating to use of tools, materials, equipment and personal safety in performance of these procedures.