

PRELIMINARY SERVICE TRIALS WITH AN EXPERIMENTAL AUTOMATIC BRAKE CONTINUITY TEST VALVE

Savings of time and capital investment can be made if the time taken for a train guard to carry out the brake continuity test during train reversal can be reduced. There is an equally important safety aspect of removing the necessity for a guard to walk to the rear of the train at night and/or along a very poor pathway. It will also remove the temptation to miss out the brake continuity test in bad weather or when time is short.

Preliminary service trials have taken place using an Automatic Brake Test (ABT) valve on a coal Merry-go-Round (MGR) service on the Eastern Region. The tests were intended to be technical in nature, but because the valve was being used in an operational environment it was inevitable that the method of working came under scrutiny. A number of difficulties were encountered - these are discussed and solutions suggested.

The service trials show that the ABT concept is technically feasible and reasonable time savings can be made. There are a number of technical aspects which warrant further investigation, notably the time required to perform the brake continuity test using an ABT valve plus a vent valve on the locomotive, and also the possibility of leaving vehicles secured only by their air brakes during run round operations.