

“The Box Hill Miniature Steam Railway Society appreciates the effort put in to revise the braking standards in the AALS Interoperability Code of Practice and would like to make the following comments for the committee’s consideration.

Braking Test

We believe this is the most important aspect of the requirements and plan to implement this forthwith. It is understood that each railway is different from a layout and gradient point of view as well as the nature of the trains operating on the track. Consequently we agree to the recommendation regarding a braking test being in the Guidelines rather than in the Code.

Although there is some concern that a single braking test, on the level, say, may not give an indication of the situation on wet track or a gradient, testing in these areas should give an example to allow a standard ratio to be calculated in each situation and allowance be made, such as reducing the speed limit.

Incorporation of a Table

The club supports the provision of a table in the Code as proposed, together with its gradually increasing requirements as the trains being used become larger. This provides clarity and provides a succinct method of conveying information which would otherwise be too lengthy and thus often not read.

Proportion of Braked Wheelsets

It is believed that the best practice would be to have 100% of all wheelsets on a train braked. However, whilst this could be recommended there will be various reasons why this can’t be achieved. It is understood that in full-size practice it is not uncommon for a vehicle or vehicles to be isolated for a particular reason.

Consequently, the club believes that for so-called ‘Heavy’ trains this minimum should be increased to 100% to improve braking capacity.

Conclusion

The Club believes that the ‘stopping distance’ is of paramount importance and provided an acceptable distance can be achieved, other matters become secondary. As clubs start implementing brake tests a common ‘standard’ should become apparent providing that it is understood that rail vehicles will never achieve stopping distances similar to motor vehicles.

Thank you for your committee’s efforts in developing this proposed amendment to the AALS Interoperability Code of Practice.”

We sincerely hope you find this submission useful.