

AGENDA ITEM 9-A
INFORMATION ITEM

TO: CHAIRMAN ZIMMERMAN AND THE VRE OPERATIONS BOARD

FROM: DALE ZEHNER

DATE: APRIL 17, 2009

RE: LOCOMOTIVE FAILURES UPDATE

At the last Operations Board meeting, Chairman Zimmerman requested that specific information on last month's locomotive failures be provided. In most cases, the failures were locomotive component failures and changes to maintenance practices have been proposed and are underway to minimize future mechanical breakdowns.

Date	Train	Unit	Reason for Delay	Length of Delay	Comments	Follow-up
March 17	#307	V23	Water pump snapped shaft	134 minutes	Water pump failure not preventable. However, Amtrak did not follow policy as the unit was recently serviced and was required to be protected with another locomotive. In addition, a power control cable required to couple the train was missing.	Amtrak is handling the man failure through their discipline process because the power cable was not connected as required.

March 18	#325	V21	Auxiliary generator failure	145 minutes	The voltage required to keep batteries charged at an idle was below the required output.	Amtrak is broadening their generator inspection procedures to ensure generators are producing the required output and that battery chargers are checked more thoroughly on regular inspections.
March 18	#338	V02	Blower motor failure	Train cancelled, causing cancellation of train 337 also	The failure caused continuous ground faults to be logged and finally latched out shutting down the engine.	Amtrak is broadening their blower motor inspection procedures to look at the amperage draw and predict the health of the motor. This will help determine when to change out and prevent this type of failure.
March 30	#301	V25	Power assembly failure	5 hours	Warranty component failure of a power assembly that was replaced in May 2008 by TMS	TMS provided new power assembly and change out has been made at no cost to VRE
April 1	#327	V31	Traction motor fire	Train cancelled – 40 minute delay to riders	Chafing of the lead electrical power input to the traction motor caused the fire.	Increasing regular inspection of all electrical leads to traction motors and blowers for chafing.
April 8	#336	V02	Low water	Train cancelled, causing cancellation to train 335 also	Locomotive made 1.5 round trips prior to receiving low water protection. Water tank was visually low.	Engine is undergoing pressure testing to detect leaks. None are currently visible.

I have directed the VRE locomotive maintenance contractor, Motive Power Inc. and Amtrak maintenance staff to do the following:

1. Conduct static electronic testing on all water pumps, battery chargers, batteries, and auxiliary generators for advance notice of the need for replacement.
2. Conduct water and oil leak inspections of the entire fleet.
3. Conduct visual inspections of all traction motors, traction motor cables, and traction motor gear cases.
4. Strengthen 92-day locomotive inspections of locomotives to include evaluation of all of the above plus include documentation indicating that the tests were performed and by whom.

5. Amtrak pledged to conduct a review of their mechanical processes by an independent team to ensure all applicable procedures are being followed. Changes to existing procedures or the development of new procedures to strengthen locomotive maintenance and oversight will sought.