Discipline Alert

An engineer while working in the St. Louis Hub area operated a train from Salem, IL to Dexter, MO. The train was an auto train with a length of approximately 7500 feet and the lead engine was equipped with an integrated computer screen that shows the end on train information on it. During the trip the "FR NOCOM" light indication came and went as they almost always do in the hills and curves with a train this size. A few days after the trip the engineer was notified that he was in violation of the rules as he should have reduced speed to 30MPH immediately when the "FR NOCOM" light came on and was removed from service pending investigation.

It is the perception of many working engineers that you have sixteen minutes after the "FR NOCOM" light illuminates before you have to reduce speed. Such is not the case. We have been told that when the "FR NOCOM" light illuminates the system has already been without communication for the sixteen minutes. The delay is built into the system.

The download was done by one of the new trackside readers and reviewed by a tape reader in Omaha. The tape reader then contacted local management to access discipline.

Since the engineer continued to operate the train at 50 MPH he is considered 20 MPH over the prescribed speed and thus a FRA decertification is called for and his license is suspended under FRA regulations.

The rule is stated below:

30.10.3 Failure of 2-Way EOT or Equivalent Device
A. 2-way EOT failure will be indicated by any of the following conditions displayed by the head-end unit (HEU):

- "DEAD BAT"
- "FR NOCOM"
- "VALVE FAIL"
- "EMERG DISABLED"
- "NOT ARMED"

B. Equivalent device failure will be indicated by:

- Loss of radio communication exceeding 16 min. 30 sec. between the controlling locomotive and occupied caboose or manned helper, such that a request for emergency braking cannot be communicated to the caboose or helper.

- Loss of radio communication exceeding 16 min. 30 sec., such that an emergency brake command cannot be sent by the leading Distributed Power consist or received by the DP locomotive(s) in rear third of train.

C. When EOT or equivalent device fails as indicated above, take the following action:

1. Failure must be reported immediately to the train dispatcher.
2. Train must not exceed 30 MPH until the ability of the device to initiate an emergency brake application from the rear third of the train is restored.
3. When failure occurs just prior to passing the crest of a grade listed in Chart 1, or while on the grade; if the train is under control, stop at the next siding or crossover where trains may pass, otherwise stop immediately. The train must remain stopped until the ability of the device to initiate an emergency brake application is restored or functioning equivalent device is added.
4. In all cases when operating on grades listed in Chart 1, if train speed reaches 5 MPH above the authorized speed, the person occupying the caboose or the helper crew must stop the train immediately using an emergency brake application.

Don’t let faulty equipment stop your paycheck, if the box blinks give the UP the 30 MPH per the rule. Uncle Pete is watching us from everywhere!