

Nevada Southern Railway

Coupling and Uncoupling Engines and Cars

Coupling and uncoupling engines and cars is probably the most dangerous job you will ever do around the railroad. Therefore safety and good work practices are paramount. You must expect train movements in any direction, on any track, and at any time. When in between cars stay very alert. If you feel or see any movement of the cars you're working on step out immediately. Assess what's going on around you, do not go back in until you know it is safe to do so. If there are other crew members working around the cars you need to warn them about the upcoming train moves. When you are ready to make train movements make sure you are in constant visual or radio contact with the engineer.

Dynamiting the Brakes

On the Nevada Southern Railway when uncoupling cars you will always dynamite the brakes. Bottling the air in cars is prohibited. Dynamiting the air is the only method used on this railroad. When working within the railroad yard limits hand signals or radios will be used for all coupling and uncoupling train moves.

Overview

When you leave an air hose angle cock open on a car you are uncoupling and the hose is under pressure, as the air hoses are pulled apart the air in the brake line will escape into the atmosphere. When this takes place the brakes on the uncoupled car go into an emergency set up, and the brake shoes will set hard against the wheels.

There are pluses and minuses to dynamiting the air brakes.

A plus-- if you dynamite the air system you know you'll get a firm set on the brake shoes against the wheels.

A minus-- when you uncouple, you lost all of the air in the cut off cars.

When you couple up, it will take time to pump the air back in the cars.

A minus-- regardless of how well sealed the air system is, in time the air that is holding the brakes will bleed off.

A minus-- when the air hoses are pulled apart there will be a lot of violent air hose whip action produced.

Air hose cock handles are set across the valve body to shut the air supply off and in line with the valve body to turn the air on. Cook handles should always be locked

In there open or closed position.